Richard Beswicke
June 15th 1852

Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

DANIEL III. verse 25.

MARTYROLOGIA;

OR,

RECORDS OF RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION:

BEING

A NEW AND COMPREHENSIVE

BOOK OF MARTYRS,

OF ANCIENT AND MODERN TIMES.

COMPILED PARTLY FROM

THE ACTS AND MONUMENTS OF JOHN FOXE,

AND PARTLY FROM OTHER

GENUINE AND AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS,

PRINTED AND IN MANUSCRIPT.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY JOHN MASON, 14, CITY-ROAD;
SOLD AT 66, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1848.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY JAMES NICHOLS,
HOXTON-SQUAR

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PREFACE.

At a period like the present, when "the Man of Sin" is rallying his energies in order to renew his tarnished glory, and his almost forgotten power; when monastic institutions are in various parts of Great Britain rearing their heads, and numerous indefatigable efforts made to gain proselytes from among the uneducated masses of the community; when members of the Imperial Parliament are standing forward as the avowed champions of the Papacy, having apostatized from the religion of their fathers, and sought refuge in the Church of Rome; when individuals connected with the ecclesiastical hierarchy of England have not only avowed friendship, and positive attachment, to the damnable errors of the Papacy, but have either openly, and without hesitation, renounced Protestantism and served at Popish altars, or maintained a cowardly and traitorous connexion with the English Reformed Church; and when, even while we are writing, a measure is undergoing discussion in the Senate, on the expediency of establishing diplomatic relations with the Court of Rome; it will scarcely be thought unseasonable or improper to call the attention of the Protestant public to the means by which the Church of Rome acquired her extraordinary power, and also to the spirit with which that power has been exercised.

In the "Records of Religious Persecution" which are now presented to the public, great care has been taken, in order that the volumes shall be adapted to the present condition of the religious world, and that due regard shall be paid to the accuracy of the statements which may be made, and to the authorities which may be adduced; the whole being intended to furnish those who do not possess the entire work of John Foxe with a portable and carefully-prepared book of martyrs, on which our readers may rely with confidence.

Considerable use has been made of "John Foxe," and properly so; because no book, with the exception of the Pilgrim's Progress of John Bunyan, has been so deservedly popular and so extensively read. The scenes which Foxe so graphically

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depicts, the tragedies he records, very often from personal knowledge; the names of the holy men who fell victims; the truths taught at the stake; and the Bibles they endeavoured to bury in the martyrs' grave; are all fitted to arouse bygone reminiscences, which may lead us to bless and praise the Most High, who gave our forefathers grace to labour, and to us the privilege of entering into their labours. The veracity and faithfulness of Foxe stand unimpeached and unimpeachable. "The volumes of this writer are the faithful registers of the awful deeds of the Church of Rome, the transcripts of those dreadful principles which have made every country in which they have obtained the ascendancy, from the wilds of the Arab to the steppes of the Cossack, a very Aceldama." Since his records came to occupy a large share of patronage and popularity, objections have been urged, not only from Papal sources, but from professed Protestants. One of the most bitter Papal opponents of Foxe was the wily Harding. The following are some of the chaste and indigenous terms in which this Jesuit speaks of the Martyrologist:—"There have not so many thousands of your brethren been burned for heresy in these last twenty years as ye pretend; and this is the chief argument ye make in all that huge dunghill of your stinking martyrs, which ye have entitled 'Acts and Monuments.'" To this Bishop Jewel makes the following free and faithful reply:—"Ye have imprisoned your brethren; ye have stripped them naked; ye have scourged them with rods; ye have burned their hands and arms with flaming torches; ye have famished them; ye have drowned them; ye have summoned them, being dead, to appear before you; ye have taken up their buried carcases and burned them; ye have thrown them out unto the dunghill; ye took a poor babe, newly born, and, in a most cruel and barbarous manner, threw him into the fire. All these things are true, they are no lies. The eyes and consciences of thousands can witness to your doings. Ye slew your brethren so cruelly, not for murder, or robbery, or any other grievous crime they had committed, BUT ONLY THAT THEY TRUSTED IN THE LIVING GOD. The worst word that proceeded from their lips was, 'O Lord, forgive them; they know not what they do: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!' In the mean while ye stood by and delighted your eyes with the sight. Oh! Mr. Harding, your conscience knoweth these to be no lies; they are written in the eyes and hearts of many thousands. These be the marks of your religion. Oh! what reckoning will ye yield, when so much innocent blood will be required at your hands!"

Milner, a zealous and subtle Romanist, in his work entitled, "The End of Controversy," declares that Cranmer and others of the Protestants were consigned to the flames because they had been guilty of high treason. Foxe is a liar, and not to be believed even when he speaks the truth. "All this," says a modern writer, "may be exceedingly convenient to the champions of the Papal hierarchy; but they know well that the martyrs in the days of Queen Mary, who, Lingard, the Romish historian, says, 'was one of the best of the English Princesses,' suffered not for infringements of civil law, but for the maintenance of Gospel truth. The policy of the Jesuits is always to filiate on Protestants the very crimes of which they themselves are guilty. Milner and Lingard show how well they have studied in the school of Ignatius Loyola. The Protestants burned in the days of Queen Mary, were burned, as legal and civil documents, still accessible, demonstrate, simply for disclaiming transubstantiation, the supremacy of the Pope, and the assumed right of the Romish Priesthood to debar the laity from reading the sacred Scriptures. But, on the other hand, the Papists who suffered in the days of Elizabeth were, as the indictments and other authentic records show, executed for high treason, for regicide principles, and for open or disguised, but clearly proved, opposition to the dynasty and sceptre of Elizabeth. A convicted murderer, of unrenewed heart, will, of course, naturally impeach Judge, jury, and evidence. The Papacy, however, has not put down the Gospel, which illustrates the glory and the functions of Christ; and it shall not crush the humbler records, which stamp his true character on the exploits of Antichrist. Neal, a far abler and purer witness than Milner, or Lingard, or Harding, confirms the testimony of Jewel in these words: 'Foxe was a person of indefatigable labour and industry, and an exile for religion in Queen Mary's days; he spent all his time abroad in compiling *The Acts and Monuments*, which were first published in Latin, and afterwards, when he returned to his native country, with enlargements. Vast were the pains he took in searching records and collecting materials for his work; and such WAS ITS ESTEEM, that IT WAS ORDERED TO BE SET UP IN ALL THE PARISH CHURCHES IN ENGLAND.'" "No book," continues the historian of the Puritans, "ever gave such a mortal wound to Popery as this."

As Foxe's Acts and Monuments will be often referred to in the progress of this work, a brief history of the book itself will not fail to be acceptable to our readers:—

"As the work commonly called Foxe's Martyrs is generally held in high estimation by that branch of the catholic church which is established in these kingdoms, some account of the various editions of this celebrated work will not, it is hoped, be unacceptable to our readers. The first form, we believe, in which it appeared, at least a small portion, and containing the first book, was under the following title, *Commentarii rerum in Ecclesia gestarum, a Wiclefi temporibus usque ad annum M.D.* 8*vo. Argentorati*, 1554.

"We suppose this volume to be very rare, having never seen it, or noticed it in any catalogue. It was followed by a much enlarged volume entitled *Rerum in Ecclesia gestarum—maximarumque per Europam persecutionum ac sanctorum Dei martyrum Commentarii*, in folio, *Basileæ*, 1559.

"This contains four *additional* books, and ends, if we recollect right, with the examinations of John Philpott. It is, like the preceding, a very rare book. There is a copy in the Bodleian Library, and also in the Cathedral Library, Lichfield. Before we proceed to the *English* editions we may notice a continuation of Foxe's *Latin* volume in the same language by Henry Pantaleon. The title is much the same as that which we have given of Foxe's *Martyrum historia, pars secunda, &c.*, folio, *Basileæ*, 1563. This is equally rare with the preceding volume. Pantaleon published many other works, but most of them are easily to be met with, compared with the present. A great portion of the contents has been introduced into the later editions of the Acts and Monuments.

"It will appear from the titles of the preceding editions, that they were printed at Basle, where the author was residing in exile, and where he 'was received,' says Strype, 'by the accurate and learned printer Oporinus, for the corrector of his press.' —'While he was here employed by Oporinus, at spare hours he began his history of the Acts of the Church, in Latin; which he drew out more briefly at first; and, before his return home into England, well near finished. Having here completed the copy, which was but the first part of what he intended, but making just a volume in folio, he sent this work to Basle to be printed; and so it was in the year 155–. It remained many years after in those parts in great request, and was read by foreign nations; although hardly known at all by our own.'

"We may now attempt some description of the first English edition of the 'Acts and Monuments;' and we give the title as furnished in Dr. Dibdin's Ames: '*Acts and Monuments* of

these latter and perillous dayes touching matters of the church, wherein are comprehended and described the great persecutions, and horrible troubles, that have bēen wrought and practised by the Romishe Prelates, especiallye in this realme of England and Scotlande, from the year of our Lorde a thousande, unto the tyme nowe present. Gathered and collected according to the true copies and wrytinges certificatorie, as wel of the parties themselves that suffered, as also out of the Bishop's registers, which were the doers thereof, by John Foxe,' folio, London, 1562, from the press of John Day.

"Of this, one of the rarest volumes in English literature, the date does not seem to be well ascertained. Dr. Dibdin thinks it may be 1563, and Strype, from whom we shall make a liberal extract, has ranged it under the year 1561. 'About this year,' says he, 'did the laborious John Foxe set forth the first edition in *English* of his great book of *Acts and Monuments*, in one thick volume. Wherein he hath done such exquisite service to the Protestant cause, in shewing from abundance of ancient books, records, registers, and choice MSS. the encroachments of Popes and Papalins, and the stout oppositions, which were made by learned and good men in all ages and in all countries against them; and especially under King Henry and Queen Mary here in England; preserving to us the memories of those holy men and women, those Bishops and Divines, together with their histories, acts, sufferings, and their constant deaths, willingly undergone for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, and for refusing to comply with Popish doctrines and superstitions. The design of writing this history was first set on foot among the exiles abroad in Queen Mary's hard days; and many of them were concerned in it, to supply Foxe with matter from England. The chief of these was *Grindal*, afterwards Bishop of London. From him Foxe had the history of the holy John Bradford, and the letters writ by him in prison, besides many other things. It was agreed upon by them, that this history of those days should be written both in Latin and English, and printed, the former for the use of strangers, and the latter for the use of our own country. And so it was. And first it was printed beyond sea in *Latin;* the overseeing and finishing of which edition detained the author some while abroad, after the entrance of Queen Elizabeth upon her Government.

"'Great was the expectation of the book here in England before it came abroad. The Papists then called it scurrilously Foxe's *Golden Legend*. When it first appeared, there was extra-

ordinary fretting and fuming at it through all quarters of England, even to *Lovain*. They charged it with lies, and that there was much falsehood in it. But, indeed, they said this, because they were afraid it should betray their cruelty and their lies, as the author speaks in the epistle before his book. The Kalendar standing before his said book, which he made on purpose to set down the names of all that suffered for pure religion in those evil days, gave the Papists great offence, taking it in that sense as though he had cast out of the Kalendar the antient saints, and in their places put new ones. But he said for himself, that he composed this Kalendar only for an *Index*, designing the month and year of each martyr. Yet, as he added, that if the cause, and not the punishment made a martyr, he judged one *Cranmer* to be preferable to six hundred *Beckets of Canterbury;* and that there was in *Nicholas Ridley* what might be compared with any that went by the name of *St. Nicholas*.

"'*Parsons* also in his book of the *Three Conversions* of England chargeth him with sporting of the Bishops registers and ancient records. Which he spake without any assured ground, more than his own uncharitable guess. He pretended *that he could have found abundant matter to have confuted* Foxe *out of the records he used, had not he and his fellows made away, and defaced the said records; which were to be found before him in the registers of every bishopric and cathedral church; but now no more, as we presume.* Which last words, *as we presume*, do plainly let us know, that what he had severely charged upon him expressly before, depended indeed upon nothing but his own, and his party's mere *presumption*. Foxe was an indefatigable searcher into old registers, and left them as he found them, after he had made his collections and transcriptions out of them. Many whereof I have seen, and do possess. And it was his interest that they should remain to be seen by posterity. And therefore we frequently find references thereunto in the margins of his book. Many have diligently compared his books with registers, and council books, and have *always found him faithful.*

"'He dedicated this *first* edition to Queen Elizabeth; and another edition, many years after done by him, he also dedicated to her. In this first edition, which is rarely to be met with, are many things, as commissions, instruments, letters, in Latin, and divers other matters, which are left out in the after-editions for brevity sake, there being such store of other things coming to light to be inserted.'

"We hope the length of this extract may be excused for the sake of the subject; it might have been much extended.

"The second edition of Foxe was published by the same printer, John Day, in two volumes, folio, 1570. The first volume contains 922 pages, besides prefixes and affixes; and the second, beginning on p. 923, ends on p. 2302. Then follows 'A diligent index or table of the most notable things in this whole book,' &c. On the back of the last leaf is Day's portrait, and a colophon agreeing with the title-pages. This second edition is better methodized, much enlarged, and has more cuts than the former. See Dr. Dibdin's Ames, vol. iv., p. 116.

"3. The first volume of Ecclesiastical History—the suffering of Martirs, &c., 2 vols., folio, newly recognized and enlarged by the author, J. Foxe, 1576.

"This is the *third* edition of the 'Acts and Monuments,' and from the press of the same printer. The pages are 2008, besides epistles, and 13 leaves of index. There are some additions in this edition—'The oration of J. Hales to Queen Elizabeth, certain cautions to the reader, and three articles omitted in their proper place, &c., but both paper and letter are considerably smaller. Mr. Heber possessed a fine copy of this edition, bound in one volume, in its primitive stamped binding.' Dibdin's Ames, iv., 140.

"4. Acts and Monuments of matters most speciall and memorable, happening in the church, with an universall history of the same, wherein is set forth at large the whole race and course of the church, from the primitive age to these latter tymes of ours, with the bloody tymes, horrible troubles, and great persecutions, agaynst the true martyrs of Christ, sought and wrought as well by Heathen Emperours, as nowe lately practised by Romish Prelates, especially in this realme of England and Scotland, newly revised, &c., and now the fourth time agayne published by John Foxe, an. 1583.

"This edition is also in *two* volumes; we have given the title somewhat at length, as Dr. Dibdin's account is rather deficient. There is a grand copy of this fourth edition in the Bodleian library, Oxford.

"5. Herbert's edition of Ames's Typographical Antiquities (vol. ii., p. 1208—9) will furnish some account of the *fifth* publication of this now voluminous work. 'Actes and Monuments of matters happening in the church, &c., now againe, as it was recognized—by the author, Maister John Foxe, the fift time newly imprinted anno 1596.' 2 vols.

"Herbert gives the date of 1597, to the second volume of this edition; 'The partners in this impression, with their shares, were as follow, viz., Mr. Harrison, 100; Mr. Bishop, 100; Mr. Watkins, 200; Mr. Wight, 200; Mr. Newbery, 100; Mr. Coldock, 100; Mr. Norton, 100; Mr. Ponsonby, 100; Mr. Dewce, 100; and Mr. Woodcock, 100. At the court holden at Stationers' Hall, April 7, 1595, yt is agreed that P. Short shall finish the impression of the B. of Martyrs from the place where Mr. Denham left—for which he is to have after the rate of xviis. vid. for a booke—for paper and printinge—the paper shal be rated at viis. the ream.' Note m. in Herbert. A copy of this edition is, we believe, in the Duke of Devonshire's library at Chatsworth." *

* Protestant Journal for 1832, pp. 48—51.

London,
March 2d, 1848.

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INTRODUCTION.

It is the persecution of Christians by Christians that has constantly exhibited a mysterious aspect to the church at large, and which ought to be fully and fairly investigated in all accounts which profess to give a history of the progress of the carnal mind, in its enmity against Almighty God. We allude especially to the accession of Constantine to the empire, and the causes of persecution by the civil power, after it became professedly Christian. Previous to this event, Christianity had made great progress; and even before the reign of Diocletian, its course through the world was, humanly speaking, inevitable; it triumphed over the persecutions of the mob and the philosophers, the Magistrates and the Emperors, to the time of Diocletian; and it is a stern, stubborn fact, that the last persecutors themselves, the worst, vilest, severest, and cruelest, published edicts in favour of Christianity before they died. So powerful had Christianity become when Constantine was made sole Emperor, that all endeavoured, to a greater or less extent, to propitiate the Christians, and to obtain favour from the Deity, by occasionally, or eventually, encouraging the Christian religion. Galerius died in Nicomedia before the publication of the Edict of Milan, and the supposed appearance to Constantine of the cross in the heavens. He was an arbitrary and savage barbarian, and is justly celebrated on the page of history for his unheard-of licentiousness and atrocious cruelty. The time, however, came when he must die; and the miseries of his death-bed were as terrible as the pangs of his own tormented sufferers, without the consolation of their hope and faith. His attendants fled in horror from his cries. He sends to Apollo and Æsculapius; but there was no voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded. He demanded the aid of the first Physicians of the day. They were brought by force, and probably murdered, as he remained uncured. "None of my companions can cure you," at length said a Christian Physician: "God has afflicted you. Your disease is not subject to our skill. I can die with my companions; but remember the war you have waged against a divine religion, and then learn of whom you should pray for a remedy." Then it was that, subdued by pain, he declared that he would rebuild the churches, and satisfy the God of the Christians. He called his superior officers around him. He commanded them to put a stop to the persecution,

and dictated the edict which Lactantius has recorded, "to permit the people to resume the exercises of Christianity." Maxentius lost his life in the neighbourhood of Rome, in the October of the following year, whilst fighting against Constantine at the head of the pagan forces. He had once granted an edict of toleration to the Christians, which he rescinded in jealousy of the splendid presents which were made by the faithful to the church in that city.

Maximin was one of those more personally cruel persecutors, who took delight in contemplating the sufferings of their victims. Exasperated at the conversion of one of his Magistrates by the firmness of a confessor in Egypt, he caused them both to be put to death; and killed with his own hand Ingraphus, the servant of the martyr Mennas, for daring to profess himself a Christian. He also published an edict in favour of the Christians; and though he palliates and excuses his former conduct, he allows the Christians to rebuild their temples, and resume their alienated revenues. Four days he lived convulsed in torture. He threw himself on the ground, tore up the earth, and devoured it. He confessed his sins. He called on Christ. He prayed with tears. He died uttering howlings of remorse and sorrow, of delirium and despair. The death of Maximin was a great discouragement to the Magistrates of the empire any longer to persecute Christianity. Licinius, also, was avaricious, ignorant, and cruel. He joined in the celebrated Edict of Milan, which gave unlimited toleration to the Christians; and after the death of Maximin, he slew those who had been most active in persecuting the church. Before his decease, he came to open collision with Constantine, and relapsed, from appearing to encourage Christianity, into avowed Paganism. He ridiculed the devotion of his rival, and gathered around him a train of priests and soothsayers to predict success to his undertakings. He defied the God of Christianity, met Constantine at Adrianople, and was defeated. He again met Constantine at Chrysopolis, and was vanquished; and thus closed the more open enmity between Paganism and Christianity. Before the Edict of Milan, which gave toleration and protection to the church, should be noticed, we would advert to some of the actions of Constantine, in order to understand that great historical problem, the causes of persecution by Christians against Christians in the church so soon after they were emancipated from the yoke and terrors of Paganism.

Mr. Townsend, in his valuable work entitled, "Ecclesiastical and Civil History, philosophically considered, with reference to the future Re-union of Christians," from which we have quoted largely, traces the whole to the following four causes:—1. The conduct of the Donatists in disturbing the peace of the empire by their factious opposition to their brethren, and to the Emperor. 2. Constantine's

subsequent fear of the recurrence of similar consequences in the disputes between the Arians and their opponents. 3. The false notion that the Christian Emperor succeeded to the divine power supposed to pertain to his pagan predecessors. The catholic church did not perceive, that whenever truth, or the desire to hold right opinions respecting God and our destiny, is regarded as a duty to God, the obedience which the subject owes to the Magistrate becomes more conventional than in those arbitrary governments, where the will of the Prince, or of the state, is the sole law, whether in things divine or human. Where truth is obtained by reflection and evidence, and not by authority only, there is always liberty. Where there is liberty, there may be much error; which must be removed rather by an appeal to argument than by the edict of the Magistrate. The power of the imperial Christian ruler was considered to be in all respects the same as that of the imperial pagan officer; and opposition to his will became a crime. Schism was rebellion; heresy was a political offence; and orthodoxy was allegiance: but schism, heresy, and orthodoxy were defined as the Sovereign pleased, and not as the church decided; and the melancholy story remains to be told, of the caprice of the Magistrate, and the mutual hatred of contending Christians.

The fourth cause was, (and this in all after-ages through nearly thirteen centuries,) that the laws of Constantine against the first heretical disturbers of his government having described the offenders against the civil law by their opinions, and not by their crimes only; the laws were supposed in subsequent periods to have been enacted against the abstract opinion only; and thus a precedent was set at the commencement of the civil establishment of Christianity, which became the principal foundation of the persecutions by the civil power which succeeded Constantine, by their episcopal followers at the dissolution of the Roman empire, and by the Bishops of Rome, until the age of Luther. When, however, the genial liberty which genuine Christianity throws around her path, is abused to licentious purposes, and to needless schisms in the church; those schisms, without any persecution on the part of the civil power, will lead men to oppose their ecclesiastical superiors; to heretical notions respecting the faith, rebellion against Princes, and great scandal to religion at large. That was indeed a dark day, when the conduct of the first dividers of the church compelled the jealousy of the secular power, and laid the foundation of that intolerable code, which still remains in the laws of the Church of Rome, and which must be repealed, if mankind would hope for repose in the profession of a common Christianity.

No sooner had Constantine ascended the throne than he assumed the pontificate, which he doubtless deemed necessary to the exercise

of authority in religious matters: he therefore hesitated not to give the sanction of the religious and civil supremacy of the Roman law to the long-despised, but now triumphant, Christianity. It was doubtless thought necessary that the supreme ecclesiastical power, as well as the highest civil authority, should centre in one individual, as formerly was the case in patriarchal times. The act, therefore, which gave unlimited toleration to all the religions in the state, was thus rendered more imperative. Maximin and Licinius were the partners of Constantine in the divisions of the empire. Maximin was a cruel opposer of the faith. Constantine, therefore, with Licinius, who at present did not oppose the truth, published at Rome the first edict in favour of freedom of religious worship. Maximin was highly incensed at the publication of the decree. He now permitted, however, arguments and persuasion only to be used to recover Christians to Paganism. He prohibited all persons from molesting them, and granted liberty of conscience to all. Subsequently, the Emperor published the glorious Magna Charta of religious liberty at Milan, in which he gave to the Christians "entire, absolute, unlimited freedom to exercise their religious worship. He cancelled all the restrictions of former edicts upon their present liberty. He commanded their churches to be restored to them, and promised that he would defray the charges of their re-conveyance, and all other expenses. It did more than all this: it conferred free and absolute permission to all, without exception, by whatever name they might be called, to follow any religion, or any form of worship, according to their will, (the word 'conscience' does not occur in the decree,) and to practise the rites of their chosen religion, without any molestation or interruption from the magistracy, or the Emperors. Two reasons are assigned for this indulgence. One is, the promoting the peace and happiness of the empire; and Christians have always prayed for the peace of the city wherein they dwell. The other is, the hope of pleasing the deity, whatever his power may be, to whose worshippers the freedom of religion is thus granted. The practices of the Heathen in their temples were necessarily suppressed some years after, in spite of this edict, in consequence of their scandalous immorality; and the sternest lover of civil and religious liberty would justify the overthrow of the public abominations, and the cruel sacrifices, which still resisted the influence of our holier faith."*

Prudence and policy demanded of Constantine, that he should observe inviolate the decree of Milan. Nevertheless, the assertion of Gibbon has some truth, "The privilege of professing and choosing his own religion, which the Edict of Milan had confirmed to each individual of the Roman world, was soon violated. The sects which dissented from the Catholic Church were soon oppressed." This

* Rev. George Townsend.

remark is made in the spirit of those, says Mr. Townsend, who would affirm or insinuate, that every attempt on the part of the state to uphold and maintain religion must necessarily be the source of persecution to some portion of its subjects. No error is so prevalent, and none so much encouraged, as the popular notion, that the persecution of Christian by Christian was the unavoidable result of the protection of the Catholic Church by the imperial ruler, and that the union of the Church and State is the sole cause of jealousy and hatred among Christians. If Emperors, and rulers, and Kings, and Queens, and nobles, and senates, are, like the people whom they govern, sinful mortals, dying and accountable, they might be expected to take measures to recommend religion to their subjects, that they might extend to others the same blessings of which they hope to partake themselves. If the duty of extending religion be put upon the inferior and more unworthy foundation of human policy only, it is no less their duty, for the benefit of the community, to establish the public morality upon the basis of religion. I would ask the meanest beggar who may believe that there is a God, or a Providence, whether if he were elevated to a throne, he would not endeavour to serve God on that throne; and whether, if he had deemed it his duty in his poverty and sorrow to bid his fellow-sufferer be of good cheer, because there was another and a better state,—he ought to be less inclined to point his fellow-immortal to God in his prosperity, than he had previously been in his adversity? Are the wearers of coronets, and robes of gold and purple, less sinful, mortal, or suffering, than the wearers of rags? If it be our duty to tell the poor that there is a better world, is it not equally our duty to tell the rich also? And are we guilty of persecution because the persons to whom we have made one equal appeal quarrel among themselves, and we endeavour to prevent that quarrel from disturbing the peace of our dominions, by using every effort in our power to reconcile them; and while we never restrain argument, we still punish the crimes and murders which result from increasing dissension? This was the conduct of the first Christian Emperor; and he who would understand his laws must place himself in the same circumstances, and then decide whether the guilt of persecution is to be imputable to the Christian Prince, or to the Christian subject; when he reads the undoubted fact, that the edict of Milan was broken, and that laws to punish religionists succeeded to unlimited toleration. If it shall be found that, on the part of the Emperor, there was unabated patience, courtesy, and anxiety to preserve the public peace, and to maintain his tolerant edict; while, on the part of certain of his subjects, there was the most needless, useless, and unjustifiable abuse of their new liberty, which showed itself in murder, rebellion, and crime; we shall throw the blame of their

violation of the charter of liberty on the schismatic, and not on the Magistrate; and call the laws which restrain crime, *punishment*, and not persecution. The conduct of the Donatists, the first violators of the unity of the church after the accession of Constantine, was the origin of the persecution of Christian by Christian. Donatus was the first Christian of whom we read, that he called a number of Christians, "My party;" that he excited rebellion against the civil power, because it refused to sanction his pretensions to exclusive authority in the government of the churches in his district. He changed his liberty into caprice, and brought odium upon freedom itself, by his insults upon the forbearance of authority.*

The Donatists, as will be shown, were ancient schismatics in Africa, so denominated from their leader, Donatus. They had their origin in the year 311, when, in the room of Mensurius, who died in that year on his return to Rome, Cæcilian was elected Bishop of Carthage, and consecrated without the concurrence of the Numidian Bishops, by those of Africa alone, whom the people refused to acknowledge, and to whom they opposed Majorinus, who accordingly was ordained by Donatus, Bishop of Casæ Nigræ. They were condemned in a Council held at Rome two years after their separation, and afterwards in another at Arles the year following, and again at Milan before Constantine, A.D. 316, who deprived them of their churches, and sent their seditious Bishops into banishment, and punished some of them with death. Their cause was espoused by another Donatus, called the "Great," the principal Bishop of that sect, who, with a number of his followers, was exiled. Many of them were punished with great severity. After the accession of Julian to the throne in 362, they were permitted to return, and were restored to their former liberty. Gratian published several edicts against them, and, in 377, deprived them of their churches, and prohibited their assemblies. But notwithstanding the severities they suffered, it appears that they had a considerable number of churches towards the close of this century; but at this time they began to decline on account of a schism among themselves, occasioned by the election of two Bishops in the room of Parmenian, the successor of Donatus. One party elected Primian, and were called "Primianists;" and another, Maximian, and were called "Maximianists." Their decline was also precipitated by the zealous opposition of Augustine, and by the violent measures which were pursued against them by order of the Emperor Honorius, at the solicitation of two Councils held at Carthage, the one in 404, and the other in 411. Many of them were fined, their Bishops banished, and some put to death. This sect revived and multiplied under the protection of the Vandals, who invaded Africa in 427, and

* Rev. George Townsend.

took possession of this province; but it again sunk under new severities when their empire was overturned in 534. Nevertheless they remained in a separate body till the close of this century, when Gregory, the Roman Pontiff, used various methods for suppressing them: his zeal succeeded; and there are few traces to be found of the Donatists after this period. They were distinguished by other appellations, as Circumcelliones, Montenses or Mountaineers, Campetes or Rupetes, &c. They held three Councils: that of Cita in Numidia, and two at Carthage. The Donatists, it is said, held that baptism conferred out of the church, that is, out of their sect, was null; and accordingly they re-baptized those who joined their party from other churches; they also re-ordained their Ministers. Donatus seems likewise to have embraced the doctrine of the Arians, though Augustine affirms that the Donatists in this point kept clear of the errors of their leader.

But, to return: the chief object of Constantine was to preserve peace. He does not appear at present to have exercised any severity against the dissidents; but as they had thrown off the name of Catholic, and that name was studiously used in the edicts of the Emperor, they were excluded from his bounty, and this omission excited their jealousy. Now also began that series of appeals on the part of the Donatists, which frequently elicited the decisions of the churches and of the Emperor against them. Dissatisfied with the censure implied in the letters of Constantine, they conducted themselves with so much bitterness, that the common cause of Christianity began to be desecrated before the whole empire. They unchurched all the churches of the country; and applying to themselves the passages of Scripture which declare the church of Christ to be a small flock, they affirmed themselves to be that flock. Their fanaticism was most disgraceful. Private meetings of Christians set themselves up against the communion of the churches, and preached the doctrine, that the church of Christ consists only of the holy, the pure, and the spotless; and that such were only to be found among the separated congregations, where were better Ministers and purer ordinances. The first appeal which the Donatists made to the Emperor to induce him to acknowledge Majorinus Bishop of Carthage, was a petition that the Gallic Bishops might consider the whole affair, and report accordingly. They decided against Donatus. Here one would have thought that the schism would have terminated; but it did not. The Emperor was exceedingly vexed and harassed by these proceedings in the bosom of that church of which he had so lately become the avowed patron. The Pagans, to his exceeding grief, derided, as the infidel party among mankind always must be expected to do, the dissensions among Christians. They afford the most common argument for

unbelief and indifference, for careless contempt and neglect of inquiry into evidence. Though some of the more refractory were imprisoned, contrary to our present notions of religious liberty, they were treated with a leniency which had never been known to his predecessors, who had been accustomed to regard the will of the Prince as the criterion of truth, and to few of his followers, either on the imperial or, in a still later age, on the papal throne. He gave proof that he desired peace at all hazards. The world saw with astonishment the manner in which a Prince of violent resentments, and originally of cruel disposition, could submit to the provocations he received when the Donatists returned into Africa, after the breaking up of these various Councils, and after his own personal decision of the quarrel. Instead of, at length, submitting to the verdicts so frequently pronounced against them, their frantic mobs attacked the very church which Constantine had built at Constantia. The Emperor orders another church to be built. The boldness of the Donatists was increased: they despised his power in proportion to his lenity, until, having exhausted every effort to restore peace by patience and compliance, the Emperor had now recourse to punishment. He did not condemn the rebels to death, as both his predecessors and successors would have done: he avoided as much as possible the shedding of blood, and was satisfied with condemning some of the more active spirits to banishment. He exiled them, not for their religious opinions, but for their utterly indefensible political conduct.*

Numerous excellent laws were passed by Constantine, between the period of the Edict of Milan, and the assembling of the Council of Nice. Nevertheless the Emperor could not yet be called a decided and uncompromising Christian; for he still consulted, to adopt the sentiments of Mr. Townsend, the Haruspices, if any public edifice was struck with lightning; and was guilty, also, of other adherences to pagan observances, which show him to have been either ignorant or inconsistent. He much ameliorated the public law by some enactments founded on Christian principles. In 312 he released the Clergy from burdensome municipal offices. He transferred by this law a privilege of the Heathen, and of the leaders of the Jewish synagogues, to the Christian Clergy. He permitted slaves, who had been hitherto manumitted in the heathen temples, to be invested with their freedom in Christian places of worship. These enactments familiarized the people with the idea of substituting Christianity, slowly and gradually, for Paganism. They were a legitimate mode of warfare, infinitely superior to punishment and persecution. In 315 he abolished crucifixion, in remembrance of, and veneration for, Him who had been crucified for mankind. In 321 he permitted legacies to be left

* Rev. George Townsend.

to the Christian churches, and in the same year decreed the great Christian law for the observance of the Lord's day. He does not, indeed, call it by that name; but by the old name, the "Day of the Sun." Rest from the usual labours, and cessation from the usual amusements, or irreligious employments of the week, had ever characterized Christians on this day. It was ever with them the poor man's day, and the Lord's day. By calling it the "Day of the Sun," Constantine endeavoured to please both parties in the empire. The Pagans would highly approve, the Christians would not severely censure, it. He prohibited the opening of the courts of law, and all labour, excepting agricultural, on that day. He permitted the manumission of slaves. It was an employment worthy of the Sabbath to let the oppressed go free. He commanded the soldiers on the Sunday to attend the service of the church if they were Christians; and if they were not, to march out into the fields, and offer a prayer in general terms to God. They were to implore the supreme Being to continue his protection unto them, to the Emperor, and to his family. He would make them pure Deists, and free from idolatry, if he could not make them Christians. He probably believed that if the mind had embraced the conviction that there was but one God, the Creator, it would soon conclude that the Creator was the Preserver; and that therefore there was a Providence; and if so, that the providence of God would be displayed by granting to the human mind some knowledge which reason alone could not obtain; and that such knowledge had only been imparted in the religion of which Christianity was the completest form. He prohibited private divinations, as the germ of all possible conspiracies. He endeavoured to suppress all magical rites, but those that were harmless; such as pretending to avert storms and tempests. He prohibited the Pagans from requiring the Christians to join in the sacrifices and ceremonies which were performed for the public prosperity, under the pretence that every citizen should interest himself for the welfare of the state. He permitted suitors to bring their causes from the courts of law to be heard before the Bishops; probably with the view of extending the knowledge of the justice and equity of the Gospel code, as well as diminishing expense, and increasing the influence of the Christian ruler. He freed the manumission of slaves from the difficulties which had previously encumbered the ceremony, by ordering that it should be sufficient to give them their freedom in the churches, in the presence of the Bishop and of the people. He relieved the Clergy from all public taxes. He abrogated the punishment of branding the face; and put an end, as far as he was able, to gladiatorial shows. Because celibacy was highly valued and commended by many Christians, he repealed the Papian or Poppæan law, which had punished the unmar-

ried. The subject was left to his own decision upon this matter. Most of these laws were great improvements. They betokened great progress. They rendered society more fused together. They gave a proof to the empire that the natural fierceness and savageness of the temper of Constantine were softened by the influence of his new faith; when the people saw him commending Christianity by the impartation of new principles to one party, without inflicting persecution and misery on the other, as his predecessors had but too uniformly done; and if the dissensions of the Christians had permitted the imperial power to have continued without interruption the work of such legislation, the advantage which the world is destined to reap from the laws of a Christian magistracy, would long ago have been attained without one great portion, at least, of that mass of misery which has intervened since the accession of Constantine. We are now to look at the next great event which became the precedent for twelve hundred years to the Christian church,—of that mingled collection of Councils, canons, edicts, denunciations of opinions, and their maintainers, which has been productive of much good, and of much more evil, to the world, which terminated in the establishment of the earthly omnipotence of the Church of Rome.*

By the position which Constantine had assumed, he considered himself the common head, or Bishop, in political affairs, and, in all questions concerning the public peace of the empire, as the head of the Christian church. He informed the Prelates of that day, that they were Bishops within, of things pertaining to the church. "I," said he, "am appointed by God to be the Bishop over things without, appertaining to the church." He left to them the administration of the word and sacraments. He assumed to himself the protection and defence, both of doctrine and discipline, against the heretic and schismatic, together with the punishment of the open enemy and assailant. The empire, which had recently been disturbed by the Donatists, now began to be agitated by the Arians; and holding the sceptre over religion, whether Christian or pagan, he summoned that Council which has influenced, more than any other similar assembly, the faith, the laws, and manners of the Christian world. The assembling of this Council formed the precedent for calling still larger Councils, the reception or rejection of the decrees of which have constantly been one source of division or union among Christians, while the enactments of Emperors, continues Mr. Townsend, that the canons of Councils should be recognised as part of the civil law of the empire, constituted new crimes, erected new tribunals, changed man into a demon towards his fellow-man, gradually checked the energy of intellect, perpetuated the reign of ignorance, discouraged the love of

* Rev. George Townsend.

knowledge, superseded Scripture, encouraged the opposite extreme to discipline, by rendering the very name of discipline hateful to the reasoning and zealous; and did all this by making heresy, which God, and not man, should punish, a crime against the state, as well as against the church; and by constituting the heretic a traitor to his temporal Prince, as well as to the spiritual church, or to his Master in heaven.

The alleged cause of the assembling of the Council of Nice was the heresy of Arius. With regard to the more especial cause, we must recollect the great disorders in the church caused by the Donatists. Open resistance to the decisions of many local synods, and to the judgment of the Emperor, to whom the sectarians had appealed, was carried to such extremes as to threaten rebellion throughout the African provinces of the empire; and the resentment of the heretical partisans was raging to a great degree of violence at the time when the unfortunate disputes concerning the Arian heresy commenced. The vexations which Constantine experienced at this peculiar crisis, and, if possible, to prevent a similar calamity following the disturbances of Arius, were doubtless the powerful motive which induced Constantine to summon the Council of Nice. The members assembled from almost all parts of the world. They met in a hall of the palace of the Emperor, whose predecessors, but a few years before, had issued from that very place the edicts of persecution and torture. A short time previous to this event, many of them had been driven, with scorn and insult, through the provinces to the mines, and to the scenes of public cruelty and malice. Now they were invited from all the cities and towns of the empire by courteous entreaty, and at the public expense, to consult in peace on the purity of that faith which they had defended with the endurance of torment, and at the hazard of their lives. The individuals had come from all parts of the Christian world. Hosius, the favourite counsellor and friend of Constantine, was there from his bishopric in Spain; with Spyridion of Cyprus, (the reprover of the Preacher who imagined he could render the Greek of the New Testament more elegantly,) whose right eye had been torn out, and the sinews of his left hand cut, and who had been sent to work in the mines, under the persecution of Maximin. Paphnutius, the Confessor, who had lost his right eye, the usual punishment of the Christian warriors, and who had been hamstrung also, in the same persecution, was there from Upper Thebais; with Potamon, the Bishop of Heraclea, who had suffered the same fate as the former, under Maximin; and who endured a second martyrdom under the Arians, ten years after the Council, by being beaten with clubs till he was left on the ground as dead. Paul of Neocæsarea, whose ears had been burnt off with hot irons;

Leontius of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, who predicted the future greatness of Gregory of Nazianzen; Amphion, Hypatius, Nicolas of Nigra, and others; with Eusebius of Nicomedia, the friend of Arius, with Theonas and Maris, and the rest who were of blameless character, but who refused to sign the Homo-ousian creed. To these must be added, Arius himself, of whom some historians report, that, whatever be his errors, he was a man of majestic deportment, and grave and venerable demeanour. Eustathius, the Patriarch of Antioch; Athanasius, the Deacon, so celebrated afterwards by his consistent adherence to the truth, and his uniform zeal under persecution or in prosperity, from whom is named the Creed which embodies, in one formula, the decisions of the churches, on the four principal controversies respecting the divinity and nature of Christ; Marcellus of Ancyra, who afterwards, in his attempts to simplify the Creed, adopted notions which other Councils condemned; Cæcilian of Carthage, Macarius of Jerusalem, Vitus and Vincentius of Rome, all names well known, and once highly honoured; with Eusebius of Cæsarea, and others, to the number of three hundred Bishops, with an innumerable train of Presbyters, Deacons, and attendants, were present at this solemn assembly.*

When the Emperor had delivered his oration, which was spoken in Latin, and afterwards interpreted into Greek by some who were present, permission was given to all to speak in their turn. After many and vehement discussions, to which Constantine paid the utmost attention, and in which he acted with great prudence the part of a kind and conciliating moderator; the Creed of the Arian party, which had been drawn up and presented by Eusebius of Cæsarea, was considered unsatisfactory, and rejected. Another, composed by Hosius, in which the word was retained which was agreed upon by all parties to be most expressively declaratory of the identity of essence between the Father and the Son, but which the Arians had refused to insert in the Creed of Eusebius, was tendered to the Council, and accepted by them as the confession of their faith, and adopted as their conclusion on the controverted question. Anathemas were added against all who introduced the heretical formula, and Arius and his immediate followers were mentioned by name. Explanations were added, to prevent misunderstanding and obscurity. The Creed was then offered, for subscription, to the members of the Council, who bound themselves, in consequence, to excommunicate from their respective churches all who adhered to and taught the condemned opinions of Arius. The laity were not required to subscribe, though they were exposed to the operation of the anathema, if they ventured on any positive innovations of the rule of faith. Twenty, or twenty-two, canons, or, as

* Rev. George Townsend.

certain Arabians say, eighty-four, were made. The three points on which they had met, the Arian controversy, the Miletian schism, and the keeping of Easter, were settled. Arius and his followers were excommunicated. The Nicene canons became the law of the empire, by the rescript of Constantine; and so ended the Council of Nice, in August, 325, amidst the general acclamations of all who were present. Subsequent Councils, and especially that of Trent, were terminated in the same manner. Five Bishops only refused to sign the Creed; and the general unanimity so pleased the Emperor, that he declared himself gratified as by a second victory over the enemies of the church. He commemorated the event by a banquet, at which all the Bishops were present. The twentieth year of his reign had been commemorated a little before, throughout all the provinces of the empire. Great rejoicings were made, and the members of the Council were dismissed, with letters of approbation, and presents of great value, to their several homes and churches.*

The determinations embraced in the Nicæan canons afford an important insight into the state of discipline and opinion at the period. Thus we find provision made, that such of the religious officers of the Pagans as might be converted to Christianity, should be accepted as religious officers among the Christians. The ancient Flamines were the sacrificing Priests of Rome. These might be made Bishops on their conversion. They were all subject, under Paganism, to the Pontifex Maximus. Gratian discontinued this title, and it was subsequently assumed by the Bishop of Rome, who claimed the privileges, authority, and honours with the title. We also find a penance of ten years prescribed to those who should have voluntarily renounced their faith; and one of thirteen years for such as should have apostatized to procure any office. The door of the priesthood was also for ever shut against those who should have done violence to their persons, like Origen. The Bishop was endowed with the power of granting, or refusing, at his discretion, the sacrament of the Lord's supper to dying persons; and if any one supposed to be at the point of death should have received the *viaticum*, but afterwards recovered, he was not to possess any superiority of rank, from the circumstance of having enjoyed absolution. In respect of the Clergy, it was decreed, that no Bishop, Priest, or Deacon should be suffered to keep women in his house, unless they were near relations. Such as had sacrificed were to be degraded; but the Novatians were allowed to retain their rank, if they consented to make profession of following the discipline of the church, and again received imposition of hands. The rights and jurisdictions of various Bishops, especially those of Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome, were also defined, without assigning

* Rev. George Townsend.

any superiority to the latter. The provision of the concluding canon was somewhat singular,—that the custom of kneeling at prayer on the Lord's days and at Pentecost, which prevailed in some churches, should be no longer continued; and that the congregation in all churches should pray standing. But the higher object of the Council was, that the catholic doctrine might be formally declared and that a judgment might be promulgated as to the basis upon which communion with the church was thenceforth to be determined.

The Bishops after the Council of Nice returned to their respective homes. John Foxe, the Martyrologist, relates the painful deaths of certain persons who were burnt for heresy. What is the connexion between these two events? The same as that between the consolations of my neighbour who died yesterday, and the events which are recorded in the Scripture, which is older than the Council of Nice. The principles of good and evil extend to unknown generations. As the blessings of the inspired revelation have continued from the age of the Apostles to the present day, so the mixture of good and evil which attended the efforts of Constantine to perpetuate those blessings, have remained to our own age, and made the Council of Nice the most important event which has occurred in the annals of mankind, since the preaching of Christ and his Apostles. Men were burnt in England by the statute law enforcing the canon law. The canon law had become binding upon the principal part of Europe, and, among other countries, on England; and this by its union and identity with that portion of the civil law of Rome, which had been received into the European codes after the time of Justinian. Both the canon law and the civil law, and for a period the statute law, of England, punished heresy as a political crime; and the heretic was a political criminal. This union of the canon and civil law in European countries, was derived from the Code, Pandects, and Novels of Justinian. These were derived from the Code of Theodosius. The Code of Theodosius consisted of the enactments of the Emperors respecting religion. Those enactments were founded upon the decrees and canons of the earliest Councils; and upon the edicts, rescripts, and general laws of Constantine the Great, which forced the Christians of the Roman Empire to adopt the canons and decisions of the Council of Nice. The line of continued punishment for opinion cannot be broken throughout the long period from the Council of Nice to the Reformation. When we protest, therefore, against persecution, we do not protest against the Church of Rome alone. We protest against the conduct and principles of that Church; but we aim a further blow at the very foundation upon which that conduct and those principles are built. We make Rome the greatest criminal; but we admit, in all candour and fairness, that it must be acquitted of the

original guilt. We have no desire to prove any church to be more erroneous than the facts of ecclesiastical history will warrant. We must, therefore, calmly and patiently survey the several sources of that peculiar state of the public mind in Europe and in England, which could patiently approve, and even applaud and admire, the inflexible severity which consigned thousands and tens of thousands to the dungeon and the stake, in the manner which Foxe and others have recorded. To do this, we must review ecclesiastical history, with reference to the development of several principles which had their birth in the Council of Nice, and trace them throughout in their effects upon the Christian church. These principles may be thus enumerated :—

The Emperor, or the civil power, was supreme over both his pagan and Christian subjects. In questions of religious belief, he was to consult the church assembled in General Council. The decisions of these General Councils were submitted to the world in the form of creeds and canons : the creeds respected faith, and the canons respected discipline. The authority of the Emperor made these decisions a part of the civil law. The sanctions of that law were the usual sanctions of fine, imprisonment, exile, or death, added to the canonical punishment of excommunication, or to the scriptural punishment of being no longer a member of the Christian community. The natural consequence of our thus extensively considering the origin and continuance of persecution, must be, that we shall be required to examine the edicts of Constantine, and the sources of the power which enabled him to make the canons of the Councils the law of the empire. Did our room permit this, we should be led to survey the principal Councils, whose decisions were engrafted on the civil law as canons of faith, discipline, and conduct. From this survey we should be led to the Theodosian and Justinian codes. After the publication of the latter, the sceptre passed from the Emperor to the Popes. It will be seen, that the Bishops of Rome then succeeded to the same power which the Emperors had possessed,—that of making the canons of Councils the Papal law, as they had before been the imperial law ; and that this power constantly increased, and was exercised against all who dared to think in a manner which the church disapproved, until the yoke became insufferable.

Hence the fatal error into which Constantine fell. " He made the decrees and canons of Nice a part of the imperial and civil law. The decrees of the Council respecting the Divinity of Christ might have been made the doctrine and creed of the universal church ; its decisions respecting the discipline of the churches might have been received as the canons or ecclesiastical rules of the church general ; and both the doctrines and canons which were now promulgated as

the conclusions of the Council, might have been regarded by Christians as binding on their consciences; the denial of their doctrine, or the violation of their enacted discipline, might have still been punished by excommunication only, as before the conversion of Constantine; but the edict of the Emperor changed the spiritual offence into political crime, and thus laid the foundation of all the subsequent persecutions. Now there does not, at first sight, appear to be any reason why the opinion of the Council should become the civil law, or why heresy should become a civil crime, to be punished by the secular authority. The ruler of England may hold the same opinion as that of a Council or Convocation of the Clergy, without declaring that opinion to be the law of the land; and it might have been better, had Constantine been contented with approving the decisions of the Council, as an individual Christian, instead of enforcing them by legislation as an Emperor. By the former conduct he would have left the church in possession of its power as a spiritual body; with the additional moral influence of the solemn decree of the Universal Council, added to the sentence of each Bishop in his respective diocess, without introducing the doctrine, that ecclesiastical conclusions may be sanctioned by civil penalties: by the latter, the mode he unfortunately adopted, he began the reign of punishment for opinion, which the Christian church has still so much reason to deprecate. When their deliberations were concluded, and his sanction as chief Magistrate of the empire had been given to their decrees, the command of general conformity was substituted for persuasion to caution and calmness of inquiry. Disobedience to the decision of the church in Council was now to be regarded and punished as disobedience to the civil authority; and banishment or subscription were the alternatives offered to the obstinate and unconvinced majority. A synodical epistle to the churches was drawn up and published. In this Arius was declared to be excommunicated and anathematized. This was accompanied with letters from Constantine. The letter of the Emperor to the Church of Alexandria declared the resolution of the three hundred Bishops to be the will of God; and that the Holy Spirit of God had dwelt in them when they came to their decision. By this very form of expression, Synods or Councils of following ages were described by those who affirmed their infallibility, and relied on their spiritual wisdom. In another letter to the churches in general, he re-affirms, that whatever may be the conclusions of a Council, those determinations must be regarded as the divine will. In a letter to Eusebius, he commanded him to take care that new churches be built, and that the Prefects provide for the execution of the decree; and he directs him to order legibly written copies of the Scriptures to be procured for the use of the churches. To these letters or edicts (for the formally

expressed will of the Emperor was the law of the subject) no objection could be made; but in other letters to the churches, which were generally circulated through the provinces, he declares Arius to be infamous; and not only condemns and anathematizes the man and his opinions, but proceeds to that extremity of censure which was the model for all the future persecutions which afflicted the churches of Christ. He published a decree in which he compared Arius with a Heathen, commanded his followers to be called by a reproachful name, and ordered that the books written by Arius be forthwith burnt, wherever they might be found. If he had been contented with this severity, the world would not have had so much cause for complaint; but he proceeded to the last extremity, and added, that if any person were found to have concealed a treatise written by Arius, and not to have surrendered it immediately, and burnt it, that person should suffer death. As soon as his guilt is proved, the decree goes on to say, he shall suffer capital punishment.

"From this time forward, the disposition of Constantine began to alter. He became, though variable in his opinions, and alternately favouring the Arians and their opponents, more and more inflexible and severe. He substituted the authority of his own edicts for the sermons of his Bishops, and banished the heretics from the cities. He published decrees against Novatianists, (though he preferred them to other real or supposed heretics,) and against Valentinians and others, by name, in the most abusive and intolerant language. He took away their churches, prohibited their meetings, and forbade them to assemble for worship, either publicly or privately. Search was made for their books, which were burnt without delay. If any of the unfortunate adherents of a suspected teacher presented themselves to the Clergy to be admitted to the communion of the church, they were subjected to a more rigid examination than proper protection of society from danger of error might seem to require. While the schismatic was admitted without delay, the heretic was received with difficulty. The deadly upas, which breathed from its poisoned leaves the fatal odour of persecution, formality, and death to the soul, while the body bowed down in the assemblies of the saints, was now planted, by mistaken zeal, in the garden of God. The churches of Christ now began to be cursed, for the first time, with that evil which is more to be dreaded than any open hostility,—compulsory uniformity of faith and worship, the unavoidable source of coldness to all spiritual religion, of lukewarmness in devotion, and of indifference, both to the interests of Christianity, and to the welfare of the churches of which they became outward and nominal members. So began the persecution of Christian by Christian. The visible church was enlarged; the invisible church, the true Israel of Israel, was diminished.

The frightful punishment of burning men alive, the common penalty for many offences, soon became the punishment for heretics only, and no longer for traitors, murderers, and poisoners; for heretics were considered guilty of the double treason against their King in heaven, and their Sovereign upon earth. Semler and Jortin are both of opinion, that the severe laws of Constantine were not observed, for they were too atrocious to be executed; and comparative toleration must therefore, have existed in many instances. This might have been sometimes the case; but the seeds of future sorrow, of national grief, of spirituality destroyed, and of uniformity compelled, were scattered. The suppression, both of boldness of inquiry, and of the mental efforts which arrive at truth by the exercise of the intellect, responsible to God alone, instead of being amenable to a tribunal upon earth, received a fatal blow. The communion of churches was now founded upon obedience to the civil law, instead of the interchange of letters from the Bishops and Clergy, anxious for the purity of the faith, and maintaining uniformity from deference to the opinions, and love for the persons, of each other. It is true, that the heretics were more to blame in the beginning than the churches; for they first dissolved the union among them, by the wrong exercise of their common liberty; but the remedy of temporal punishment led to evils worse than the disease. The laws of Constantine may not have been immediately executed to the full extent of their severity; but the time was soon to come when security from popular indignation, and the possession of unlimited power, permitted the unrelenting enforcement of the most tyrannical and shameful of these laws; and the Christian rejoiced to shed the blood of Christians, as the heathen persecution had so lately triumphed over the confessor and the martyr. The laws of Constantine were the basis of the miseries of persecuting centuries. The spark was awhile concealed, but it soon kindled into a flame. Perverted religion became the curse of the world. Men seemed to become demons, and kindled on earth the flames of hell. Compassion, indulgence, and mercy, became crimes, if the heretic were the object of their exercise; and the lesson was given to the world, which painful experience has taught it to know with perfectness, that legislatures must avoid injustice and cruelty in theory, as well as in practice."*

A period of fifty-six years elapsed between the Council of Nice and the second General Council held at Constantinople; the empire, in the meantime, having fallen under the dominion of Constantine II., Constantius II., Constans, Julian the Apostate, Jovian, Valentinian, Gratian, Valentinian II., Valens, and Theodosius the Great. All of these, whether orthodox in the faith or otherwise, may be said to have

* Rev. George Townsend.

pursued the policy of Constantine, in enforcing the observance of the canons by the civil law. In the meantime, says Mr. Townsend, the divisions in the church, caused by new metaphysical theories, as well as by the rancour and malevolence exhibited against the defenders of the Nicene faith, by the heterodox disciples of those of the preceding ages, who were authors of Anti-Nicene doctrines, had at this time proved exceedingly baneful to the church. The plausibilities and courtly intrigues of the Arians were successful in gaining over Constantius to favour their cause. The disputes on controverted and mysterious points increased in virulence, the further they were carried on; while abilities and learning were thrown away on both sides without bringing the inscrutable questions in dispute nearer to a settlement. Athanasius signalized himself more, perhaps, than any other antagonist of the Arian heresy; and the refutations which the theorists suffered from the unanswerable truths and exposures of his pen, made him a distinguished object of their implacable revenge. Through their undivided favour with the Emperor, and the calumnies to which they had recourse, together with the denunciations of synods partially convened, the Arians succeeded in obtaining a sentence of banishment against their pious and vigorous adversary. Another sect originated from the peculiar opinions of Priscillian, a Spanish Bishop, whose character is given by Sulpitius, with his usual spirit and brilliancy of style. He is said to have been a man of great learning and eloquence, endowed with vast powers of body and mind; who, by assumed modesty and gravity, was calculated to gain ascendancy over ordinary capacities. Idacius, an aged Presbyter, in conjunction with Ithacius, Bishop of Sossaba, (a doubtful locality,) accused him before a Council at Saragossa, in 380, with being a teacher of Manichæan doctrines, and obtained his condemnation; but the death of Gratian prevented the rescript for his banishment being put in force, and he was again restored to his see for a short time. His accusers then urged the civil power, that the heresiarch might be expelled from the cities of Spain, which had generally become infected with his errors; and the Magistrates issued their decrees accordingly. Upon this the Priscillianists sought protection in Italy, and prayed to be heard in their own defence before Damasus, Bishop of Rome; they appealed, also, to Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, for the same privilege; and in both these cases their suit was rejected. Maximus, the Usurper, at the death of Gratian, entered Treves, at the head of his forces; and Ithacius immediately sought to obtain his decree against the heretics. Priscillian also appealed to the same authority; and Maximus took upon himself the office of Judge in this case. The heretics were accused of spreading opinions opposed to Christianity: they were declared guilty, and condemned by the Emperor. Martin, Bishop of

Tours, interposed, and implored Maximus, that since they stood expelled from the churches by the sentence of ecclesiastical Councils, it was a new and unknown evil for a secular Judge to undertake to decide cases purely spiritual. The interference in behalf of the lives of the condemned party was ineffectual; and Priscillian, with several of his deluded adherents, suffered death at Treves. It has not been satisfactorily shown what the precise opinions of this sect were; but, not consuming the eucharist, omission of fasts, the enjoining of celibacy, and making perjury in time of persecution a pardonable crime, are stated to have been errors of which they were guilty. Whatever may have been his offence, Priscillian is deemed the first martyr to sectarian opinions, under the operation of the system which resulted from the measures of Constantine.

We are now brought to look at the publication of the Theodosian Code, as the next cause of Christian persecuting Christian. It was undertaken at the command of Theodosius the younger. It contains the imperial Constitutions from Constantine to his own time. The infliction of the severe punishment of banishment upon Arius, and the sentence of death denounced upon the readers of his books, were much regretted, we may believe, by the Emperor Constantine, if we may judge of his feelings by his future conduct. The laws which thus established persecution, as a part of the penal code of the empire, were probably passed as an experiment to prevent, rather than as a principle to punish, heresy. The absurd and wicked experiment, however, if it were such, was repeatedly renewed by his successors. A mass of confused and sanguinary enactments was at length passed and consolidated, with various enlargements and additions into that atrocious and cruel Code, which is not only execrated by the friends of humanity and religion for its detestable provisions, but which is memorable in the annals of jurisprudence, as being the foundation of that intolerable canon law against heresy, by which the Church of Rome became the principal criminal in the guilt of persecution, which was first established, and which must, therefore, be shared, by the Emperors. Though the Justinian Code, which was promulgated between the years 528 and 566, when the edicts which Justinian published after the last edition of his Code were collected into one volume, and given to the world under the name of *Novellæ*, confirmed and strengthened the principal regulations of the Theodosian Code; nevertheless, the latter must be regarded with close attention, as the principal foundation of the persecuting canon law. The imperial edicts by which Christianity was first tolerated, then legalized, and then established as the religion of the empire, were now collected into one volume of laws. Immediately after its publication, the Theodosian Code was received, by an edict of Valentinian III., into the empire of

the West. The Justinian Code superseded its authority in the East; but the Code of Theodosius still retained its influence in the West, and therefore in Italy and Rome. The barbarians, who about this time invaded that portion of the empire, permitted the Romans to retain the use of their existing laws. In 506, Alaric, King of the Visigoths in Gaul, ordered a legal code to be prepared, in which the Roman and Gothic usages and edicts should be formed into one body of law. This was accordingly done by his Chancellor, Anianus; and it was called from him, the *Breviarium Aniani*. This body of law was extracted chiefly from the Theodosian Code, from the works of the principal Roman lawyers, and from the edicts of the subsequent Emperors between Theodosius and Alaric. It was published for the use of the Western empire, before the Code of Justinian was compiled. It superseded the former laws, and became the only legal work of authority. The enormous and inexpiable evil it occasioned to mankind was, that it not only confirmed in the West all the persecuting enactments which had begun in the Eastern empire; but it habituated the new tribes, which were now becoming a part of the empire, to the idea of persecution for religious opinion. The Church of Rome was now beginning to seize the fallen sceptre, and to mount the vacant throne, of the imperial Sovereign; and when the barbarians came down to hold divided empire with the Church, they found that the civil and ecclesiastical authorities were united to punish heresy as a crime, and heretics as criminals; and they were not slow to follow the general example, and to strengthen the universal error. When the Manichees fled from Africa to Rome, about the year 445, and the Bishop of Rome of that day, Leo the Great, appointed inquisitors to discover and bring them to trial, he only followed the example of the Emperor Theodosius, who had already appointed inquisitors to search out heretics. Many of the provisions of the Theodosian Code were subsequently repeated, also, in the capitularies of Charlemagne. The Manichees, whom Diocletian had commanded to be burnt alive, were no less persecuted by the Christian Emperors, whose edicts formed a part of the Theodosian Code. Valentinian, Gratian, and Theodosius the Great, renewed the same law; and Messianus, the Proconsul of Africa, immediately executed some of that sect whom he had discovered. They were condemned by the Theodosian and Justinian Codes; and Huneric, King of the Vandals, imitating the imperial example, caused great numbers of the party to be burnt alive, and banished the rest from his dominions. The Manichees were accused of great crimes as well as erroneous opinions; and history is obscure on this point. However this may be, they were persecuted, not for crime alone, but for their errors as a religious party; and this persecution was practised, not by one ruler, but by many; not as the custom of

one day or year, but as the result of the universal law which began with the Heathen, and was continued by the Christian, Emperors; and which was executed alike by the Bishop and the Vandal, and which has remained till nearly our own day, as the disgrace and curse of Christianity.*

Instead, therefore, of declaiming against the Bishops of Rome, as the authors of the crime of persecution, we shall consider in what manner the guilt of that crime must be imputed to the Emperors who enacted the first laws, and laid the foundation for the subsequent folly, of that Church. The power of the Church of Rome was based on the canon-civil law; and it is necessary, therefore, to our rightly understanding the causes of the universal prevalence of persecution by the Church of Rome in the days of its greatness, to survey the code of laws upon which its influence and authority were established. It is not sufficient to declaim against the Church of Rome. Our wiser plan will be to ascertain the causes of the conduct we condemn; and to endeavour to show in what manner they may be removed. He is not a philosophical student of history who selects the chief facts which float on the surface of time, and either eulogizes or censures the actors, without reference to the circumstances which led to the transactions in question. We are anxious to dwell on the sources of the crime, rather than to indulge in the usual descriptions of the sufferings and the sorrows of the victims, or in angry denunciations against the ecclesiastical criminals. We may safely indulge the hope, that the state of public feeling that permitted the sanguinary scenes to which allusion has been made, will never again recur; but the best mode of preventing the possibility of the recurrence of persecution is, to point out the causes of its former prevalence, as a warning both to rulers and their people.

A sufficient insight into the severe enactments against heresy, embodied in the Theodosian Code, having shown that dissent from certain doctrines was punishable by confiscation, by cutting off the testamentary privilege, by banishment, by torture, by death, by all the inhuman and horrible ways of inflicting torture and death that inquisitions could devise, a very brief notice of the subsequent legislative decrees in the Code of Justinian will be sufficient. The spirit of the atrocious laws, says Mr. Townsend, preserved in the Code of Theodosius, was maintained in the East as entirely as in the Western part of the empire. They were enlarged and extended by the Code of Justinian, in which enactments are contained, that, in the present age, would appear to be no less intolerable than those of Theodosius and his predecessors. Justinian and his assistant legislators, Ulpian, Papinian, and others, have been admired and praised for their sound judgment, as the oracles of juris-

* Rev. George Townsend.

prudence. Yet, none of these eminent civilians were sufficiently wise to perceive that the law of Christ is the only true philosophy respecting the best mode of abolishing or preventing heresy. None of the great legal authorities of the day could understand, that the growth of the tares together with the wheat, while the wheat was the great object of the husbandman's attention, was the best and only way to prevent the extension of the tares. It was left to the experience of an age so late as our own, to discover the profoundness of the philosophy of the New Testament; and to perceive that the wisdom of Christ was the anticipation of the best inferences which could be derived from the study of history. The atrocious, unphilosophical, unchristian, and even barbarous, laws of Justinian could not have been enacted, if the legal advisers of the Emperor had been imbued with the holy gentleness of the religion they professed. They would otherwise have taught their imperial master to tolerate, rather than to destroy, the subjects who differed from him; and to maintain truth to the utmost, without aiming to eradicate error by any other means than permission to inquire, and encouraging the discussion of the pretensions and claims of the teachers and doctrines of Christianity.

The laws of Justinian against the heretics are principally found in the fifth title of the first book of the Code, which treats of heretics, Manichees and Samaritans. The first law is the same as that in the Theodosian Code, which confines the privileges of the faithful to the orthodox only; and to ascertain who is eligible to the privileges of the faithful, it is determined, that he is a heretic who deviates in the slightest degree from the smallest article of the well-considered decisions of the Catholic religion in matters of faith, and from the minutest enactments of the Catholic religion in point of discipline. Another definition is, "He is a heretic who is not orthodox:" a comprehensive description, which sanctioned all the subsequent enlargements of the Creed, to decide, as controversies arose, who were heretics. An addition was afterwards made, which confines the privileges of dower to orthodox women only.

By the second law, all heresies were to cease; none were to teach or learn profane, that is, heretical, things. We omit the enactments respecting the appointments of Bishops, as not relevant to the subject; but direct the attention of the reader to a point on which a great portion of the justice of the laws before us must unavoidably turn; and that is the meaning of the words "heresy" and "heretic," as they are given in the words of Theodosius and Justinian, and consequently, also, by the writers who have implicitly followed their authority. The definition in the Novels of Justinian is this: "We declare those also to be heretics who are attached to any kind of heresy, and all who are not members of that holy, catholic, and apostolic

Church, in which are all the holy Bishops and Patriarchs of the whole world, both of Italy, and Rome, and Constantinople, and Alexandria, of Theopolis, and Jerusalem; and all the Bishops who are appointed by them to preach the apostolic faith and tradition. We justly call those heretics who do not partake of the holy communion in the Catholic Church with the Bishops, who are honoured of God. Although they give to themselves the title of Christians, still, as they separate themselves from the faith and communion of Christians, we know that they are condemned by the just judgment of God." It will be observed, that the Church of Rome is here mentioned in the proper manner, as one of the churches only, which held the apostolic and catholic faith; and not as the sole depository of the faith, or as the mother and mistress of all the churches.

The third law deprives heretics of all their places of worship, whether called churches or by any other name; and the houses or buildings in which they meet are to be given to the Catholic Church. All meetings, too, even for prayer, whether by day or night, are to be punished by the payment of heavy fines. The fourth law decrees, that "all Manichæan men or women, and all Donatists, are to be severely punished; and they are to be deprived of the protection universally granted by the laws to all, and which we punish with confiscation." "We regard," it says, "the heresy of Manes, and of the Donatists, as a public crime against our divine religion, which is done to the injury of us all, and which we punish with confiscation; we declare them to be neither capable of succession, nor of receiving gifts, nor buying, selling, giving, or contracting; and we decree, that the inquisition into such crimes be contrived after the death of the heretics." If a man be discovered to have been a Manichæan, his last will is to be made void, with all its codicils and provisions. His sons are not to inherit unless they renounce Manichæism; all their favourers, receivers, and accomplices, are to be condemned; servants are to denounce their masters, and to be welcomed with gratitude by the Church.

By the fifth law, a long list of heretics, especially Manichæans, are commanded to remain no longer in the Roman territory. The Manichæans were to be driven from the cities, and put to death, that they might do injury to no one. The law then proceeds to repeat and enforce the enactments of the Theodosian Code, and declares all the laws against heresy to be in force. It mentions the places of heretical worship with contempt as mere conventicles, while the heretics who frequent them are commanded never to assemble for worship at all, nor to build any churches for that purpose. In imitation of the conduct of Constantine, who ordered the Arians to be called by ignoble epithets, heretics were commanded by the sixth law of this part

of the Code to be branded with the name of their respective founders, and not to be called Christians. None are to dare to keep, read, or discuss their books, which are to be diligently sought for and burnt,—no mention is even to be made of them,—nor to hold communion with their authors or readers in any place, house, or field, on pain of excommunication; and no meetings are to be held for the purpose of discussion, either publicly or privately.

The seventh law provides, that none are to be admitted to offices of trust but the orthodox. The eighth law is the longest and most important of all this part of the Code. Its first decree, that the four first Councils are to be venerated, forms a part of the laws and articles of the Church in England, and of the other episcopal Churches generally throughout the world. Its second enactment condemns the Eutycheans and Apollinarians: it goes on to command, that any Bishop who ordains any of these heretics should be banished; and that such heretics were neither to hold conventicles, nor to build churches: if they did so, their houses were to be confiscated to the Church. Those who disobeyed this humane command were to be fined; and if they were too poor to pay in purse, they were to pay in person, by being beaten with mallets or clubs; whether they were beaten to death or not, does not appear. Heretics were not to be admitted into the army: if they were there already, they were to be deprived of their rank, and banished from society, whether in the palace, the cities, towns, or provinces. No public discussions were to be held with them. No notice, either in writing or by any other mode, was to be taken of them. None were to keep their books; and all who were convicted of so doing, were to be subjected to perpetual banishment. All who kept their books from curiosity were to be fined very heavily; and those who persisted to teach unlawful doctrines were to be put to death. All their books were to be burnt; and all Magistrates who neglected to perform their duty, were to be fined ten pounds of gold, a sum equivalent to £400.

The ninth law gives to heretics a little earth for charity. "We deem it a humane and pious thing," says the insolent pity of the decree, "to give heretics permission to bury their dead in the usual grounds for burial." The tenth decree enacts, that any land sold to heretics, on which are the churches of the orthodox, shall be confiscated; the purchase being made void for the good of the Church. The eleventh is the most summary, harsh, and tyrannical. "Wherever Manichæans are found, let them be executed; wherever a Manichæan is found on the Roman territory, let his head be taken off." The twelfth decree is, that the Manichæans be everywhere banished and executed. Other heretics, a heretic being merely not one of the orthodox, such as Pagans, &c., were to be deprived of rank, office, and magistracy, lest

they became the judges of the orthodox and Bishops. To this it was added, that when parents are of different religions, the orthodox only shall rule in the matter of education. The thirteenth law provides, that heretical parents are to maintain, give in marriage, and endow their orthodox sons, as the Magistrates and Bishops direct. The orthodox children of heretical parents are to receive that portion of property which would have been granted to them if their parents had died intestate. If their heretical parents offend them, they are to be brought to trial and punished. Thus, the members of a family were made the judges of the religion of each other; and the words were literally fulfilled, "A man's foes shall be they of his own house."

The fourteenth law was no less infamous. It decreed, that heretics were not to be permitted to hold meetings, ordinations, baptisms, synods, lands, or abbacies, nor defend them by law, nor take charge of them by themselves, or others; nor do anything prohibited. The penalty of disobedience to this law was death. By the fifteenth law, Manichæans were commanded to leave their property to their orthodox children only. The sixteenth provided the most extraordinary precaution against Manichæism, by enacting, that if a convert from Manichæism were found guilty of doing anything which savoured of his former error, or if he conversed with a Manichee without denouncing him to a competent tribunal, he was to be put to death. Self-denunciation, or friend-denunciation, was no less commanded by the canon or inquisitorial laws of Spain, than in this statute of Justinian, which, besides decreeing that all Manichees be denounced, commands the surrender of all heretical books to the Magistrates, in order that they may be burnt. The sixteenth law commanded, that the synagogues of the Samaritans were to be destroyed; that the orthodox should make wills, settlements, or deeds of gifts; and that Bishops were directed to see that property bequeathed by heretics should be confiscated to the benefit of the Church. The eighteenth law applied to the Samaritans all the former edicts against heretics. By the nineteenth law the children, and, if they have no children, the nearest relations, of the orthodox were to inherit their property. If no relations claimed it, it was to go to the public treasury.

Gothofred insists, in this part of the Code, that the celebrated bull, *Excommunicamus*, which is still read yearly at Rome, and by which certain heresies and heretics, ourselves among the number, are declared infamous, and pronounced to be under a ban, their goods confiscated, and their sons declared to be incapable of succession to their property, is still only without force from want of power to execute its provisions. The reason upon which all ecclesiastical severity is justified, is affixed to this bull, that it is a greater crime to offend eternal than temporal Majesty. By the same law, all who are sus-

pected of heresy are declared infamous, unless within one year they prove themselves, or are proved, to be innocent.

The twentieth law is an epitome, or recapitulation, of the former. Heretics who baptize are outlawed. The twenty-first decrees, that heretics are not to be admitted as witnesses against the orthodox, though they may be against each other; and the twenty-second law confirms the provisions of the former. Various constitutions of the more immediate successors of Justinian are also appended to the civil law. They are not, however, generally considered as a part of that law which consists solely of the Pandects, Institutes, Code, and Novels. It will, therefore, be enough to say further of them, that they maintain, in religious matters, the same spirit of intolerance which characterizes the law of his predecessors. The Emperor Leo proceeded further than even Justinian. He commanded the Jews to live according to the manner of the Christians; an edict which follows some wise enactments, that all are to rest from labour on the Lord's day. A revolter to Judaism was to be severely punished by the same law. A law of Heraclius banished the Jews from Constantinople, and commanded them not to come within three miles of the city. These constitutions are continued to the reign of Michael Palæologus. It is only necessary to say of them, with regard to their enactments concerning religion, that none of the Emperors appear to have considered toleration to be either the duty of Sovereigns, or the privilege of subjects. The will of the Emperor was the sole criterion of truth. The imperial mandate was regarded as the best arbiter of controversies, provided the orthodox was satisfied, and the heretic was helpless.*

The time was soon to arrive when these sacerdotal usurpations were to yield to the Papal supremacy, and the imperial power was to be given to one Bishop of Rome, rather than to the Bishops of the empire. We must now leave the civil Princes of the earth, who had succeeded in establishing the ecclesiastical authority of the rulers of the churches over their people, to consider that stupendous dominion which grasped the sceptre of the Cæsars, which executed to the utmost the laws of that imperial intolerance, and which enforced with decision, energy, and cruelty, the most atrocious principles of its once-powerful masters, till mankind revolted from the yoke. I shall, therefore, says Mr. Townsend, only add, respecting the laws of Justinian, that so much of them is good and excellent, that, though very many of them may be said to be superseded, the civil law, as an indisputable authority, has obtained either a general or partial admittance into the jurisprudence of nearly all the governments of Europe; and even where it is least favourably received, it has been regarded with

* Rev. George Townsend.

great deference and respect. This could not have happened, had it not been deeply and extensively grounded on principles of justice and equity; applicable, excepting always in many of its religious decrees, to the public and private concerns of mankind, at all times, and in every situation. The principal enactments of the Theodosian Code were embodied in the Breviary of Anianus, and so became the general law of the Western empire. The Codes of Justinian, as a body of Roman law, ceased to be the law of the Western empire when the exarchate of Ravenna, the last Italian possession of the Emperors, was conquered by the barbarians in the year 753. This year is universally assigned as the era of the final extinction of the Roman law in Italy. The result of all these laws was, the establishment, over the catholic church of Christ, of the power of the Church of Rome, the gradual and increasing influence of which now commenced. The ecclesiastical authority continued for some years to encroach upon the imperial; each subsequent Pope continued to augment the dominion of his predecessor, till the ecclesiastical influence of the East and West, which has thus been growing and strengthening from age to age, together with the absolute authority of the imperial rule, became united and concentrated in the see of Rome.

It is beyond the object of an introduction such as this, to trace the successive usurpations of temporal as well as spiritual power practised by the Romish Pontiffs and the Clergy during the darkest ages of European ignorance, when possessions were regulated by custom only, and transactions were chronicled in the memory alone. Among those nations, those great vassals, those Kings, who could neither read nor write, the most superficial instruction was sufficient to enable the Clergy to engross the management of most civil concerns. They held in their hands the keys both of religion and letters; they drew up wills, marriage-contracts, agreements, and public acts; they extorted legacies and donations; they emancipated themselves from the secular jurisdiction, and strove to make all persons and all things amenable to their own. It was in the latter half of the eleventh century that the whole extent of the Papal pretensions was manifested, and that those pretensions began to be enforced with unbounded arrogance and inflexible perseverance. Hildebrand, for instance, endeavoured to raise the empire of the priesthood over the rest of mankind, and the domination of the Pope over the whole priesthood: he consequently found it necessary to concentrate the relations of the latter, to separate them more completely from the rest of the world, and form them into one great family. He resolved to establish celibacy as a rigorous law, and to treat the wives of Priests as concubines, excommunicating them and their husbands, if their union were not immediately dissolved. Some of the Clergy resisted; but Hildebrand,

to put away the semblance of opposition, set down and treated the complaining parties as heretics.

The circumstances of the times, says a modern writer, were most favourable to the ambitious designs of Hildebrand. Ever since the death of Otho the Great, the German empire had been declining; Italy was divided into petty states; a young King was seated on the throne of France; the Moors were masters of the greater part of Spain; the Normans had recently conquered England; and the kingdoms of the north, newly converted, and ignorant of the limits of the Pontifical authority, might be expected to set an example of docility. Dalmatia, Sardinia, and Russia were in the eyes of Hildebrand but fiefs dependent on the tiara. "In the name of St. Peter," he wrote to the Russian Prince Demetrius, "we have given your crown to your son, who is to come and receive it at our hands, on taking an oath of allegiance to us." To give a complete list of the Princes whom Gregory VII. excommunicated, it would be necessary to mention all who reigned contemporaneously with himself: Nicephorus Botoniates, Greek Emperor, whom he commanded to abdicate the crown; Boleslaus, King of Poland, whom he declared to be deposed, adding, that Poland no longer should be a kingdom; Solomon, King of Hungary, whom he referred to his aged subjects to learn from them whether their country belonged to the Romish Church; the Spanish Princes, to whom he wrote that St. Peter was lord paramount of all their petty states, and that it would be better for Spain to be completely subdued to the Saracens, than not to pay homage to the Vicar of Christ; Robert Guiscard, the Norman conqueror of Naples, who, to strengthen a right acquired by the sword, had consented to acknowledge himself the Pope's vassal, and whom he punished by his anathemas for the slightest disobedience; the Duke of Bohemia, from whom he exacted a tribute of one hundred marks in silver; Philip I. of France, of whom he required the same kind of tribute, and whom he denounced to the French Bishops as a tyrant steeped in guilt and infamy, who was unworthy of the royal title, and whose accomplices they made themselves, if they did not vigorously resist him. "Follow the example," said he, "of the Romish Church, your mother; separate yourselves from the service and the communion of Philip, if he continue hardened; let the celebration of the holy offices be interdicted throughout all France; and know that, with the assistance of God, we will deliver that kingdom from such an oppressor." But, of all the European Sovereigns, the Emperor Henry IV., who had most influence in Italy, was, for that very reason, most exposed to the thunderbolts of Hildebrand.

Against all these potentates, and Henry IV. in particular, Gregory had no other ally, than the Emperor's cousin, a woman of little

ability, but extremely devout: this was Matilda, Countess of Tuscany. She lived on bad terms with her husband, Godfrey the Hunchbacked, and was strongly attached to Gregory, who, as her spiritual director, wrote extremely affectionate letters to her,—circumstances which have led to the inference of a more intimate connexion between them. This Princess gave all her possessions to the Holy See; and though they were afterwards seized by the Emperor Henry V. as her heir, the Popes did eventually obtain part of this donation, and called it the Patrimony of St. Peter.

Henry IV. had just gained a victory over the Saxons, with whom he was at war, when two Legates arrived with orders from the Pope to repair to Rome, and answer to charges which had been preferred against him. They related to investitures which he had given to Bishops, a right claimed by the Pope, who threatened to excommunicate him, unless he sought pardon for his fault. Henry, in a Council held at Worms, deposed Gregory, who, aware of the inefficacy of such a decree, replied to it by the following:—"In the name of Almighty God, and by my full authority, I forbid Henry, the son of Henry, to govern the Teutonic kingdom and Italy; I absolve all Christians from the oaths which they have taken, or may take, to him; and all persons are forbidden to render any service to him as King." This extravagant denunciation was sufficient to wrest from the Emperor the fruit of all his triumphs; civil war was rekindled in Germany: an army of confederates assembled near Spire, surrounded Henry, and obliged him to engage to suspend the exercise of his power, till judgment should be pronounced between him and the Pope, in a Council at Augsburg, where the Pontiff was to preside.

To prevent this definitive decision, Henry resolved to beg pardon of Gregory, and for that purpose repaired to the fortress of Canossa, where the Pope was shut up with his Countess Matilda. He went without guard or retinue. He was stopped in the second court, where he suffered himself to be stripped of his garments, and a hair shirt to be put upon him. Barefoot, in the month of January, 1077, he awaited in the court the answer of the Holy Father. That answer was, that he must fast three days before he could be admitted to kiss the feet of Gregory; at the expiration of that time the Pope would receive and absolve him, upon the promise of entire submission to the future judgment of the Council of Augsburg. This excessive arrogance and tyranny revolted the Italians. Lombardy armed for Henry, whom the Germans abandoned; and the empire elected another head; Italy set up another Pope.

The vengeance of Gregory's successors pursued the Emperor. His son, at the instigation of Pascal II., rebelled against him, and procured his own election to the imperial dignity. The three ecclesias-

tical Electors, the Archbishops of Mentz, Cologne, and Treves, tore the diadem from his brow with their own hands; and an Emperor, who had distinguished himself in sixty-six battles, was reduced, through the persecution of the Church, to such abject want, as to be obliged to solicit, but unsuccessfully, an humble office in a church which he had himself built. When he died, the Pope would not permit the remains of the excommunicated Prince to rest in peace: they were torn from the tomb, and for five years remained unburied, till the Clergy of Liege ventured to inter them, and for so doing called down upon themselves the Papal anathemas.

In the eleventh century originated in several churches the use of an oath, by which each newly-elected Prelate engaged "to defend the domains of St. Peter against every aggressor; to preserve, augment, extend, the rights, honours, privileges, and powers, of the Lord Pope and his successors; to observe, and with all his might to enforce, his decrees, ordinances, reservations, provisions, and all dispositions whatever, emanating from the court of Rome; to prosecute, and to combat to the last extremity, heretics, schismatics, and all who will not pay to the Sovereign Pontiff all the obedience which the Sovereign Pontiff shall require." This oath has been taken by Bishops who had Sovereigns that were not Catholics. Who could have conceived that Kings, whether Roman Catholics or not, had permitted their subjects to contract engagements so contrary to the public order of society? Complaints have been made of it in Hungary, in Tuscany, in the kingdom of Naples; and the Prelates of Germany have subjected this form to restrictions. But it is so revolting in itself, and so foreign to the discipline of the first ten centuries of the church, that we cannot imagine how any one could seriously allege it as a proof of the necessity of Bulls of Institution. The Pontificate of Eugenius III. is rendered memorable in the history of the Papal power, by the approbation which he gave of the decrees of Gratian. The term *decrees* is here applied to a canonical compilation, completed in 1152 by Gratian, a Benedictine Monk, born in Tuscany. The recent discovery of the Pandects of Justinian had revived in Italy the study of civil jurisprudence; and the first of these studies was soon deemed subordinate and supplementary to the other.

This leads us to the notice of the ecclesiastical laws against heresy, which are unrepealed by the Church of Rome: indeed, what law has she ever repealed? It may be objected, that the same necessity does not now exist, for the repetition of these laws against those who were opposed to the faith of the Romanists. This, however, is a great mistake. If the Romish hierarchy had renounced the Canons, Decretals, Bulls, and Rescripts that embody the worst elements of persecution it would be ungenerous to upbraid them with the deeds of their

predecessors. But they neither have renounced, nor can as Romanists renounce, the principles that received the stamp of infallibility in days that are passed. The Church of Rome cannot recede one jot from her ancient pretensions, without renouncing the ground on which she stands. It would be suicide to admit that her most sanguinary canons were sinful and erroneous. Nor does she wish to make any such concession. She may cast dust in the eyes of Protestants; she may profess all meek and merciful things; but this is designedly, and for a specific end. Depressed, she arrays herself in all the pomp and splendour of universal liberality and good-will: in Spain, in Italy, and in Britain too, if she were what she would be, these attractive assumptions drop off, and the woman, drunk with the blood of martyrs, trampling on the name of Christ, and on the hopes and happiness of believers, starts into bold and prominent relief.

I. The laws, ecclesiastical and civil, made against heretics by Popes, Kings, Emperors, and Councils, may be reduced to the following heads: —(i.) Laws which are made for the preservation of the members of the Roman Catholic Church from falling into what they call heresy. (ii.) The laws made for the discovery of heretics, their favourers, abettors, or such as are suspected to be inclined to heresy: now they are either such as empower persons to be active in inquiring after them, and encourage them to make discoveries of this nature, or such as lay an obligation on them, to be diligent in making these inquiries and discoveries; and upon others, to assist them in so doing. Or, (iii.) Laws which refer to the punishment of heretics, discovered so to be, and the engagement which they lay upon men to execute these punishments.

II. (i.) So conscious are the Romish Prelates of the gross absurdity and the apparent folly of their own doctrine, and the manifest contradiction that it bears, in many of its articles, to Scripture and the clearest reason, that they dare not permit the meanest members of their own Church to look into the Scriptures, or make inquiry into the articles of their faith; or even trust a child of the age of twelve years, without an oath, binding him firm unto their superstitions. 1. It hath been decreed by several Councils, "That all males at fourteen, and females at twelve, years of age, shall abjure all heresy, extolling itself against the holy Catholic Roman Church, and orthodox faith; and shall swear also, that they will hold the Catholic faith which the Roman Church teacheth and holds." This is determined by a Council of Bishops and Prelates held at Toulouse, in France, A.D. 1229; (can. 12;) also by a Council held at Besiers, A.D. 1246; (can. 31;) by a Council of Bishops and Prelates held at Alby, in France. (Can. 11, 12.) Moreover, this oath, by the decrees of the Council of Toulouse and Alby, is to be renewed every two years. Again, "All

that do come in and confess their heresy, must take the same oath." (Council of Besiers, can. 5.)* 2. "All Consuls, Governors of castles, authorities, and Barons, must be compelled, by ecclesiastical censure, to abjure heretics, with the favourers and abettors of them:" so determines the Provincial Council of Narbonne. (Can. 15.)† 3. "No layman, upon penalty of excommunication, must dispute, publicly or privately, touching the Catholic faith," saith Nicholas III. (*Const.*, sect. 19.)‡ 4. "No layman must have any books of the Old or New Testament, except the Psaltery, the Breviary, and the Hours of the Blessed Virgin," (three New Testament books of the Roman edition,) "any of which they must by no means have in the vulgar tongue," saith the Council of Toulouse. (Can. 14.) § Such unworthy arts do give just reason to all persons to suspect the truth of that religion which requires thus to be supported by oaths and abjurations made by children: by stopping the mouths of men, and not permitting them to ask that reason of their faith which all men are obliged by their Christianity to be in readiness to give to all that ask it: (1 Peter iii. 15:) and by withholding the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which are able to make them wise unto salvation; (2 Tim. iii. 15;) which by the law of Moses were to be continually read unto, and continually talked of by, the people; (Deut. vi. 7;) to which they, by the Prophets, were advised to go, and by which they were to pass judgment on those who spake unto them of religious matters; (Isai. viii. 20;) which our Lord doth enjoin them both to hear and search; (John v. 39;) as also his Apostles, commending them who from their youth had known, and who upon occasion searched, the Scriptures; (2 Tim. iii. 15;) and also those of the New Testament, which were written in the most vulgar language, that all might know them; (Acts xvii. 11;) and with plainness of speech, that they might understand them; (2 Cor. iii. 12;) and which were left to be a rule of faith and practice, to all succeeding generations, which the primitive fathers do strongly commend to the perusal of all Christians, and which the heathen persecutors, as fiercely as the Roman Catholics, did strive to wrest out of their hands.

III. (ii.) If, notwithstanding all this care to keep the people ignorant and blind, some by the strength of natural reason and religion, and others by conversing with men of better principles, or reading that pestilent, and therefore carefully forbidden, book, the word of God, come to the knowledge of his truth, and be convinced of the superstitions and follies of the Roman doctrines, and become, according to their notions, heretics; all imaginable care is used that they may not escape their cruelty, nor find even a corner in villages and woods, above or under ground, to hide them from their fury: therefore, for the

* Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., pp. 430, 693, 724, 725. † Ibid., p. 308.
‡ Magn. Bullar. Rom., tom. i., p. 157. § Labb. Concilia, tom. i., p. 430.

better discovery and apprehension of heretics, as well as of those who favour and encourage them, or are suspected of doing so, the following persons are authorized to be employed in that work; namely, Inquisitors of heretical pravity, constituted by his Holiness for that end; * all Archbishops and Bishops in their respective provinces and dioceses, with their Officials and Vicars; † all Abbots within their precincts. And, further, for the assistance of these persons, "every Governor or Magistrate throughout Lombardy and Italy is bound to keep twelve honest men, two Notaries, and as many servants as the Bishop, or two of the brethren Inquisitors, shall see fit, who shall be bound to search after and apprehend heretics, or bring them within the power of the Diocesan or his Vicars; and to require all persons to assist them in so doing." ‡ Such are the persons authorized by as good authority as the Court and Church of Rome possess, to discover and apprehend the heretic and his abettors. And their commission is exceeding large. For instance: —

IV. 1. If the Bishop or his Vicar, the Inquisitor or these twelve Officers, require it, the Magistrate must assist them in inquiring after, arresting, and the spoliation of heretics, by furnishing them with soldiers: this must be done by cities, under the penalty of one hundred pounds; and by villages, under the penalty of twenty-five pounds. § By the Constitutions of Clement IV., "every Governor and private person is also bound to assist the Inquisitors and Officials of the Bishop and his Visitor." 2. "They shall also have power to compel the neighbourhood to swear, that if they know of any heretics, or of any that keep secret conventicles, or any that believe, defend, receive, or favour heretics, they will give notice thereof to the Inquisitors appointed by the Apostolic See." ‖ The Council of Toulouse decrees, "That the Archbishops and Bishops shall, in every parish within and without their cities, compel one Priest, and two or three honest laymen, or more if needful, by their oath, that they will diligently, faithfully, and frequently inquire after heretics in the said parishes, by searching any house, or subterranean receptacle, that may give suspicion of them; and if they find any heretics, believers, favourers, receivers, or defenders of them, they will take them into custody, and then with all speed give intimation of them to the Archbishop,

* Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 619.

† The Bull of Martin V., published with the consent and approbation of the General Council of Constance, begins thus: "Martinus Episcopus—Archiepiscopis, Episcopis ac Inquisitoribus hæreticæ pravitatis ubilibet constitutis." (Mag. Bullar. Rom., tom. i., p. 288.

‡ Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 605; Constit. Innocentii Quarti, cap. iii., iv.; Constit. Clement. IV., Leg. 3; Mag. Bull. Rom., tom. i., p. 91.

§ Constit. xix. Innocent. IV.; Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 606.

‖ Labb. Concil., tom. xi., part i., p. 608.

Bishop, Lord, or Bailiff of that place."* This decree is renewed by the Provincial Council of Besiers, held A.D. 1246; (can. 34;) † by the Council of Alby; (can. 1;) ‡ by the Council of Arles, A.D. 1234. (Can. 5.) § The Council of Saltzburg, held A.D. 1420, (can. 32,) ‖ commands "all persons, under the penalty of excommunication and eternal death, as soon as they know that any heretic is in their territories, to discover him to their superiors; and all Magistrates, when the Inquisitors give notice of such, are bound, under the same penalty, to apprehend, imprison, and deliver them to the Inquisitors." And by the Constitutions of Nicholas III., directed to Christians, all are liable to excommunication, who neglect to do so.¶

3. "The Lords of territories must be solicitous to inquire after heretics in their houses and in the woods, and destroy their hiding-places." (Concil. Toulouse, can. 3, stat. Raimundi, Com. Toulouse; Concil. Albiense, can. 4.)** "They must assist, also, the Ordinary in arresting them, under the penalty, likewise, of excommunication." (Concil. Paris, A.D. 1346, can. 4.)†† 4. "All Earls, Barons, Rectors, Consuls of cities, and other secular powers bearing any office whatsoever, must be admonished by the Diocesan to swear, that they will faithfully and efficaciously assist the Church, according to their power and office, against heretics and their accomplices, and will use their utmost diligence therein; and if it be found requisite, they, by the infliction of Church censures, must be compelled to do so," saith the Council of Besiers; (can. 9;) the Council of Alby; (can. 20;) the Provincial Council of Narbonne.‡‡ And suitably to this, the canon law determines, that "all Earls, Barons, Rectors, and Consuls of cities, and other places, shall, at the admonition of the Bishops, engage themselves by an oath, when required, that they will faithfully and efficaciously help the Church, according to their office and power, against all heretics and their accomplices." §§

V. There are not only the decrees of Popes and Emperors, and of Provincial Councils, but many of them are confirmed by General Councils. For, 1. The fourth General Council of Lateran, assembled A.D. 1215, (can. 3,) ‖‖ decrees, that "all Archbishops, by themselves or their Archdeacon, or by some fit and honest persons, twice or at the

* Labb. Concil., tom. xi., part i., p. 428.
† Ibid., p. 694.
‡ Ibid., p. 722.
§ Ibid., part ii., p. 2341.
‖ Ibid., tom. xii., p. 325.
¶ Mag. Bullar. Rom., tom. i., p. 156.
** Conc. Labb., tom. xi., part i., pp. 428, 449, 723.
†† Labb. Concil., tom. xi., part ii., p. 912.
‡‡ Ibid., part i., pp. 679, 693, 694, 726, 489.
§§ Corp. Jur. Canon., tom. ii.; Decretal, lib. v., tit. vii., cap. ix., p. 238.
‖‖ Labb. Concil., tom. xi., part i., p. 152.

least once a year, shall visit their own parishes, in which it is reported that any heretics dwell; and shall compel three or more men of good report, or, if it seem expedient to them, the whole neighbourhood, to swear, that if any of them know of heretics, or of them that keep secret conventicles, or that differ in their lives or manners from the common conversation of the faithful, they will endeavour to acquaint the Bishop with them." The General Council of Constance, that is, Martin V., with the consent and approbation of that Council, commands "all Archbishops, Bishops, Inquisitors, Commissaries, or elect persons, by virtue of their obedience, that every of them within their limits, or places of their jurisdiction, diligently do watch for the extirpation and correction of all errors and heresies. And wheresoever they find any that are reported or are even suspected to be guilty of those crimes, to compel them, under the penalty of excommunication, suspension, interdict, or confession of the crime, or any other more formidable punishment, canonical or legal, to take a corporal oath upon the Evangelists, the relics of the saints, or a crucifix, to answer to the questions they shall ask them."* Now the questions, among many others, are these following; namely,—

(1.) "Whether they think it lawful that such an oath should be imposed upon or taken by them, for their purgation; that is, an oath *ex officio*, obliging them to condemn themselves." (2.) "Whether they hold it a mortal sin to be guilty of perjury, though it be to save their lives, or for the advantage of the faith. This may be done by Catholics, but must not be done by heretics." (3.) Whether he believes, "that after the consecration of the Priest, in the sacrament of the altar under the elements of the holy bread and wine, there remains no material bread and wine, but the same Christ entirely, who suffered on the cross, and sits at the right hand of the Father." (4.) Whether he believes, "that the consecration being made by a Priest, under the species of bread alone, and without the species of wine, there is the true flesh, and blood, and soul, and deity of Christ, and whole Christ, in his broken body, and the same Christ absolutely, and under every one of the species in particular," that is, whether there be one million of Christs, and yet but one. (5.) Whether he believes, "that the custom of communicating laymen in the species of bread alone, approved by this holy Council, be to be observed, so that it is not lawful to change it without the authority of the Church;" that is, whether he hold that the Council, forbidding what Christ commands, is to be obeyed before Christ. (6.) Whether he believes, "that the Pope, being canonically elected, is the successor of St. Peter, and hath supreme authority in the whole Church of God."

* Labb. Concil., tom. xii., p. 263.

With many questions of the like nature, containing the whole superstition of the Church of Rome.*

2. If any person whom they suspect to be guilty of heresy will not undergo such canonical purgation, or by a damnable obstinacy refuse thus to swear, in order to his purgation, he is to be condemned as a heretic; according to the fourth General Council of Lateran,† and the General Council of Constance.‡ 3. This power is given to "Archbishops, &c., throughout all parts of the world where any heresy ariseth; namely,§ to make these inquiries, and proceed in like manner;" so that no country where this religion doth obtain, "can expect anything but a continual butchery of all who will not be most gross idolaters." And, 4. They command their officers "to proceed against, and to condemn as heretics, all persons, of whatsoever dignity, office, pre-eminence, state, and condition they shall be, and what names soever they are called, who think otherwise of the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, or of baptism, or of confession of sins, or of penance, or any other sacraments, or articles of faith, than the holy Roman Church and universal teacheth, and as heretics to give them over to the civil Magistrate."‖ 5. They renew, also, the Constitution of Boniface VIII. concerning the Inquisition, "requiring and commanding all powers, and Lords temporal, and Judges, of whatsoever dignity, name, or office, as they desire to be reputed Christians and sons of the Church, and to glory in the name of Christ, that they obey and attend these Inquisitors and other ecclesiastical persons deputed, or hereafter by the Apostolical See to be deputed, for the finding out and punishing of heretics, affording them their aid and favour in finding out, apprehending, and imprisoning them, and all that do believe, favour, receive, or defend them."¶

VI. (iii.) The laws which refer to the punishment of heretics, when they are discovered and apprehended, are either such as declare what punishments shall be inflicted on them, or such as oblige men to inflict those punishments. Now the punishments which by their laws must be inflicted, are the following; namely, excommunication, confiscation of their goods, imprisonment, exile, death. (Concil. Bitter.,** A.D. 1246, can. 2.) 1. "They must be excommunicated, with all their favourers, every week." (Council of

* Concilia Labb., tom. xii., p. 269.

† Ibid., tom. xi., part i., p. 152.

‡ Ibid., tom. xii., p. 262.

§ Ibid., p. 263.

‖ Ibid., p. 261.

¶ Corp Jur. Canon., tom. ii., Sexti Decret., lib. v., tit. ii., cap. xviii., p. 332. Fol. Paris., 1687.

** Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 688.

Besiers, A.D. 1233,* can. 1; and A.D. 1246, can. 8;† and the Council of Alby, can. 19.‡) They are actually excommunicated, according to the canon law.§ This sentence passes upon them yearly in the Bulla Cœnæ. 2. They must lose all their goods. Whosoever apprehends them, (which all have liberty to do,) hath free leave to take from them all their goods, and full right to enjoy them. (Const. Innocentii IV., cap. 2.‖) And this punishment, saith Innocent III., "we command to be executed on them by the Princes and secular powers, who shall by ecclesiastical censures be compelled thereunto." Moreover, after the sentence is pronounced against them, "their goods, if they have any still remaining, shall be all confiscated, and never shall return unto them." (Const. Fred. 2;¶ Concil. Bitterense, can. 3;** Statuta Raimundi, Com. Tolos.;†† Concil. Arelat., A.D. 1234, can. 5.‡‡) "The very house in which the heretic is found must be destroyed, and never built again; and the ground must be confiscated; and so must all the other houses contiguous to it, if they belong to the same person; (unless it appear to the Inquisitors that the landlords were wholly inculpable;) and all the goods must be sold, or become his that takes them." (Innocent. IV., cap. 26;§§ Concil. Tolos., can. 6;‖‖ Concil. Albien., can. 6;¶¶ Stat. Raimundi, Comit. Tolos.;*** Concil. Bitter., can. 35.†††)

3. They are to be imprisoned without delay. And when they have them thus in hold, the Governor is, by the Constitutions of Pope Innocent IV., obliged "to compel them, by any punishments which do not dismember them, or endanger their life, expressly to confess their errors, and to accuse all other heretics they know of, and the believers, receivers, or defenders of them; and to tell where their goods are." (Const. Innocent. IV., cap. 25.‡‡‡) Which constitution is renewed by Clemens IV., const. xiii., leg. 24;§§§ and is the ground

* Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 453.
† Ibid., p. 679.
‡ Ibid., p. 726.
§ Corp. Jur. Canon., tom. ii., Sexti Decret., lib. v., tit. ii., cap. vii., p. 331.
‖ Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 605.
¶ Ibid., p. 622.
** Ibid., p. 678.
†† Ibid., pp. 449, 450.
‡‡ Ibid., part ii., p. 2341.
§§ Ibid., part i., p. 607.
‖‖ Ibid., p. 428.
¶¶ Ibid., p. 449.
*** Ibid., p. 694.
††† Ibid., p. 723.
‡‡‡ Ibid., p. 607.
§§§ Magn. Bull. Rom., tom. i., p. 92.

of all the cruelties which those creatures meet with in the Inquisition.

VII. 4. They must be banished, exterminated, or driven out of all places where they are. For the Council of Cologne commands "all that are subject to it to rise up against heretics, their favourers and receivers, and faithfully to procure their extermination." (Can. 9, A.D. 1425.*) And in order hereunto, all secular powers must swear to expel heretics out of their dominions.† The Constitutions of the Emperor Frederick II. run thus:—"We make a perpetual decree, that the officers, Consuls, Rectors, whatsoever office they enjoy, shall, in defence of the faith, take a public oath, that they will honestly endeavour, with their utmost power, to expel all heretics, as such, condemned by the Church, out of their territories. And all that shall be admitted hereafter to any place of government, temporal or perpetual, shall be bound to take this oath, or lose his government." Ludovicus VII., King of France,‡ with the advice of his nobles, sets forth his edicts against heretics, "commanding all his Barons, Bailiffs, and other subjects, present and future, to be solicitous and intent to purge their territories from heretics and heretical pravity, and to swear to the observation of this and all other statutes made against them. They must swear to do their endeavours to exterminate out of their dominions all heretics, believers, receivers, favourers, or defenders of them, according to the Council of Alby,§ can. 20. The Council of Arles gives power to the Bishop to compel them, by Church censures, to take this oath. (Can. 3:‖ see the like, Concil. Bitter., can. 9;¶ and can. 32.**) The Constitutions of Innocent IV. decree, "that every Governor in Lombardy, having called a common Council, shall put forth his edict, to banish all heretics from under his jurisdiction, and to declare that none of them shall stay within his authority." (Const. 2.††) Now, for the better execution of this punishment, it is decreed,

VIII. 1. "That if any Governor knowingly permit a heretic to dwell in his dominions, he shall be excommunicated." (Concil. Bitter., can. 2.‡‡) 2. "That whosoever, having temporal dominion, neglects to prosecute those who by the Church are denounced heretics, or to exterminate them out of his province or dominion, is to be deemed a grievous favourer of heretics." (Concil. Narbon., can. 15.§§) 3. "He who knowingly permits a heretic to abide in his dominions, shall for ever lose them; and his body shall be in the power of his Lord, to do with him as he ought." (Concil. Tolos., can. 4;‖‖ Concil.

* Labb. Concilia, tom xii., p. 363. † Ibid., tom xi., part i., p. 622.
‡ Ibid., p. 423. § Ibid., p. 726. ‖ Ibid., part ii., p. 2340.
¶ Ibid., part i., p. 679. ** Ibid., p. 693. †† Ibid., p. 605.
‡‡ Ibid., p. 677. §§ Ibid., p. 492. ‖‖ Ibid., p. 428.

Bitter., can. 2;* Concil. Alb., can. 5.†) "If the temporal Lord, being required, shall neglect to purge his territory from heretical pravity, after one year elapsed from the time of his monition," saith the Emperor Frederick, "we expose his territories to be seized by Catholics; who, having exterminated the heretics, without contradiction shall possess it, and preserve it in the purity of faith, so as no injury be done to the right of the superior Lord, who doth not any way oppose this procedure; provided notwithstanding that the same law take place against them who have no principal Lords." (Const. Fred. II.‡) And this Constitution is confirmed by Honorius III.§

IX. Now all these Constitutions of Popes, Kings, Emperors, Provincial Councils, are also confirmed by the approved General Councils of the Roman Church, and are extended and enlarged by them to Kings, Emperors, and supreme Governors: so they are not only Constitutions of state, or of the court of Rome, but also of the whole Church of Rome. For, 1. The fourth General Council of Lateran begins the chapter against heretics thus:‖—"We excommunicate and anathematize every heresy extolling itself against the holy orthodox Catholic faith, which we have now expounded, condemning all heretics, by what names soever they are called.¶ We anathematize them, their defenders and receivers." 2. The third General Council of Lateran,** under Alexander III.; the fourth General Council of Lateran,†† under Innocent III.; and the General Council of Constance;‡‡ decree, that "the goods of heretics, if they be laymen, shall be confiscated."

3. They decree, that "the temporal Lords, being required by the Inquisitors, Archbishops, Bishops, &c., shall within their jurisdiction, without delay, imprison heretics, and cause them to be kept in close custody,§§ by putting them into fetters and iron chains, till the Church hath passed sentence on them; and not freeing them from prison without the licence of the Bishop or Inquisitors.‖‖‖ And, 4. They decree,¶¶¶ that the "secular powers, what offices soever they enjoy, shall be admonished, and, if needs be, compelled by ecclesiastical censure, that as they desire to be reputed Christians, so they

* Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 677.
† Ibid., p. 723.
‡ Ibid., p. 622.
§ Magn. Bullar. Rom., tom. i., p. 64.
‖ Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 148.
¶ Ibid., tom. x., p. 1522.
** Ibid., p. 1522.
†† Ibid., tom. xi., part i., p. 149.
‡‡ Ibid., tom. xii., p. 260.
§§ Ibid., tom. xii., p. 260.
‖‖‖ Corp. Juris Canon., tom. ii., p. 238, Decret. Sext., lib. v., tit. vii., cap. 9.
¶¶¶ Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 148.

will take an oath for the defence of the faith, that they will honestly endeavour, with their whole power, to exterminate all heretics condemned by the Church out of their territories." Thus the fourth Lateran Council hath defined. The General Council of Constance requires* "all Archbishops, Bishops, and other persons chosen for this work, to admonish and require all Kings, Emperors, Dukes, Princes, Earls, Barons, &c., and by the apostolical authority to command them, to expel all heretics forementioned out of their kingdoms, provinces, cities, towns, castles, villages, territories, and other places, according to the canon of the Lateran Council, which begins with the words, *Sicut ait;* that is, according to the twenty-seventh canon of the third General Council of Lateran,† which, under anathema, forbids any one to allow the heretics there mentioned to tarry within their houses or territories."

5. The fourth Council of Lateran adds, that "if the temporal Lord, being required and admonished by the Church, shall neglect to purge his territories from heretical pravity, he shall be excommunicated by the Metropolitan and his Suffragans; and if he neglect to give satisfaction within a year, this shall be signified to the Pope, that he, from henceforth, may pronounce his subjects discharged from their obedience, and expose his territories to be enjoyed by Catholics, who, having exterminated the heretics, shall possess it without all contradiction, and keep it in the purity of faith, so that no injury be done to the principal Lord, who doth not oppose his procedure; provided notwithstanding that the same law take place against them who have no temporal Lords."‡ Now let it be observed, that both the Councils of Constance§ and of Basle‖ do reckon this Lateran among those Councils which all their Popes must swear to maintain to the least tittle, and to defend even to blood; and that the Council of Trent not only hath declared it to be a General Council, but also affirms one of its definitions to be the voice of the whole Church; and therefore these three General Councils must be supposed to approve of all that is cited from this Council. The General Council of Constance¶ decreed, that "all heretics, all followers and defenders of them, or partakers with them, though they shine in the dignity of Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops, Kings, Queens, Dukes, or any other ecclesiastical or mundane title, shall be pronounced excommunicate in the presence of the people every Sunday and holy-day; and that the Archbishops, Bishops, and Inquisitors shall diligently inquire concerning them who hold, approve, defend, dogmatize, or receive such heresies or errors as they before had mentioned, of what

* Labb. Concilia, tom. xii., p. 260. † Ibid., tom. x., p. 1522.
‡ Ibid., tom. xi. part i., p. 148. § Ibid., tom. xii., p. 239. ‖ Ibid., p. 623.
¶ Ibid., p. 271.

dignity, state, pre-eminence, degree, order, or condition soever they may be; and if they be found guilty, or represented to their disadvantage, they by their authority shall proceed against them by the punishments of excommunication, suspension, interdict, and also of deprivation of their dignities, offices, and benefices ecclesiastical, and also of their secular distinctions and honours, and by any other penalties, sentences, ecclesiastical censures, ways, or measures which they shall judge expedient, even by taking and imprisoning their persons, and executing upon them any corporal punishments with which heretics are wont to be punished, according to the canonical sanctions." The General Council of Siena confirms this Bull of Martin V., made with the approbation and concurrence of the Council of Constance, and thus renews all the forementioned decrees.*

X. And whereas our Lord declares, "he came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them," they have set up under the banner of the cross a host of men, on purpose to exterminate, destroy, and butcher those whom they are pleased to call heretics; and, to encourage them in this inhuman service, they promise them the greatest privileges. The Council of Bourges, approved by the General Council of Basle, declares, that "war may justly be waged against condemned heretics, and that Princes and Christian people may be stimulated to fight against them." The fourth General Council of Lateran decrees, that† "they who, under the badge of the cross, will exterminate heretics, shall enjoy that indulgence and that holy privilege which is granted to them who go in defence of the Holy Land; and that is, full remission of all their sins which they confess, and for which they have been contrite; and a greater degree of everlasting happiness than others are warranted to expect." (Can. 3.) The third General Council of Lateran decrees,‡ "they shall be taken under the defence of the Church, and shall be secure from any manner of molestation in their goods and persons, and shall have two years' release of the penance enjoined them, and receive greater indulgence at the discretion of the Bishops." (Cap. 27.) The General Council of Siena § decrees, that "all who prosecute and procure the extirpation of the Wickliffists and Hussites, shall enjoy all the rights, privileges, and indulgences concerning the pardon of their sins, which have been granted to those who rise up against heretics. And to all that will prosecute them, apprehend, or bring them to the Inquisitors; or, if they cannot apprehend, will expel them from their territories; and, if they be required, will also fight against them; they promise all the privileges granted to those who went to the assistance of the Holy

* Labb. Concilia, tom. xii., p. 367.
† Ibid., tom. xi., part i., p. 149.
‡ Ibid., tom. x., p. 1523.
§ Ibid., tom. xii., p. 368.

Land." So also doth the canon law.* Eugenius IV., in his Bull of revocation of the General Council of Basle, objects this to them, "that against the decrees of the Holy Fathers, and the edicts of Emperors, which deny the admitting heretics to audience, and in prejudice to the authority apostolic, and the authority of the holy Councils, they had invited the Bohemians to dispute at Basle, about certain articles condemned by the decrees of the Popes and Councils," it being notorious to the whole world, that the Bohemian heretics were duly and solemnly condemned in the Council of Constance, and in the Council of Siena they were by divers processes of the Apostolic See, and his Legates, repudiated once and again; and that war was proclaimed, and the secular arm invoked, against them. "He shall obtain of God the kingdom of heaven who dies for the defence of Christians," saith a lemma of the canon law: the words of the chapter are said to be directed by Leo IV. to the French army; and they speak thus, namely, "Laying aside all fear and terror, act boldly against the enemies of the holy faith, and the adversaries of all religion; for the Omnipotent knows, that, if any of you die, he expires for the true faith, the preservation of his country, and the defence of Christians; and therefore he shall obtain of God a heavenly reward." †

XI. The last punishment which these creatures must undergo is death. They shall not be suffered to live, say the Constitutions of Frederick II. "The Patareni, and all other heretics, shall be duly punished by the secular Judge; they shall take them away by a damnable death."‡ "For their extirpation we decree," saith Ludovicus VII., King of France, "that, being condemned, they shall be punished with the animadversion due unto them." § So also doth the canon law. (Decretal, lib. v., tit. vii., cap. 13.) By the statute of our King Henry IV. against the Lollards, "after the sentence pronounced against these heretics, the Mayor, the Sheriff, or their officers, who must be present at the execution, shall take them into their custody, and burn them before the people in some eminent place." ‖

The Constitutions of Frederick II. decree, that "the same punishment shall be inflicted upon those who cherish and defend them;" and upon all who having once abjured their heresy relapse into it. ¶

* Corp. Juris Canonici, tom. ii., Decret. Sexti, lib. v., tit. vii., cap. xiii., p. 240.
† Ibid., pars ii., caus. xxiii., qu. viii., cap. ix., tom. i., p. 327.
‡ Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 621.
§ Ibid., p. 423.
‖ Corpus Juris Canon., tom. ii., Decret. Greg., ix., lib. v., tit. vi., cap. xiii.
¶ Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 619.

If after death they shall be found to have been heretical, "their bodies must be digged up, and their bones burnt." (Concil. Albiense, can. 25.)* "And the temporal Lords, by the Diocesan and the Inquisitors, must be compelled by ecclesiastical censures to dig up their bodies." (Concil. Alb., can. 27.)† Moreover, "The sons and successors of heretics,‡ or of their receivers, defenders, or favourers, must be admitted to no public office or benefice, ecclesiastical or secular, nor to succeed to the inheritance of their fathers." (Const. Fred. II., Innocent. IV., cap. 29.)§ Such are the laws established, which lay an obligation upon those of this communion to punish heretics.

XII. And that what they have thus established may be inviolably observed, they decree, 1. That all the Governors forementioned must proceed, according to their Constitutions, against all heresies exalting themselves against the Church of Rome. (Clem. Constit. 8.) ‖ That "these punishments of heretics must by no means be relaxed." (Const., Innoc. IV., cap. 32.)¶ And as they must not be relaxed, so neither must they be delayed. For, "when any person is condemned for heresy, the Magistrate, within five days, must execute the sentence which hath passed upon him." (Innoc. IV., Const., cap. 24.)** He must presently receive them into his custody for that end. "He shall punish them without delay;" (Const. Ludovici, Regis Francorum;)†† and, that no person may have any temptation or excuse, either for relaxation or delay, they are required to execute them without any further inquiry whatsoever: for, by the Constitutions of Innocent VIII., "all Magistrates, under the penalty of excommunication, must execute the penalties by the Inquisitors imposed on heretics, without revising the justice of the act; because heresy is a crime merely ecclesiastical." (Const. 10.)‡‡

XIII. Moreover, that no Governor may plead ignorance of any of these laws, by the Constitutions of Innocent IV., "every Governor must have a copy of them inserted into the statute-book of the city where he doth preside."§§ (Const. 38.) Clemens IV. commands all rulers throughout Italy to write down in their chapter-acts, or in their books of statutes, the Constitutions set forth against heretics by Innocent IV. and Alexander IV. "If any blot out, diminish, or alter any of these Constitutions without the consent of the Apostolic See, he must be proceeded against as a public defender or favourer of heretics;" (Innocent IV., Const. 34;)‖‖ that no person may plead

* Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 727. † Ibid., p. 728. ‡ Ibid., p. 622.
§ Ibid., p. 608. ‖ Magn. Bullar. Rom., tom. i., p. 157.
¶ Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 607. ** Ibid., p. 607.
†† Ibid., p. 423. ‡‡ Mag. Bull. Rom., tom. 430, Luxembourg, 1727. fol.
§§ Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 609. ‖‖ Ibid.

an obligation, by virtue of any other Constitutions, to neglect the prosecution of these laws. All statutes contrary to them, throughout all Italy, must be abolished and rased out of all places and cities within their jurisdiction." (Innoc. IV., Const. 37.)* By the Constitution of Urban IV., "the statutes of any city, castle, village, or other place, whereby the business of the inquisition of heretical pravity is directly or indirectly hindered or retarded, are made void, and the Rectors and Governors of these places are, by ecclesiastical censure, to be compelled to revoke them." †

XIV. Again: that, knowing of these Constitutions, they may not dare to be remiss as to the execution of them; at their admission they must swear to the observance of them: "he who will not do so, must not be owned as a Governor in any place in Italy, nor must any of his acts be valid, nor any person be obliged to perform the oaths made to him." (Innoc. IV., Const. 1.) Nor is he, by the laws of Frederick II.,‡ to be admitted as a Governor in any place of the empire. And these two Constitutions are made a part of the canon law, as you may see. (Sexti Decretal., lib. v., tit. ii., cap. 11.)§ If, having thus sworn, "he shall neglect to observe all and several of these Constitutions, he must be divested of his office and government, and be henceforth incapable of any dignity, office, and honour, and must be prosecuted as a person infamous, perjured, suspected concerning the faith, and a favourer of heretics."‖ (Const. Innoc. IV., Const. 1.) If he do not proceed according to these rules against all heresies lifting themselves up against the Church of Rome, he must be punished with an excommunication and an interdict upon his jurisdiction, to be inflicted by the Inquisitors on all refusers. "If any Bishop be negligent or remiss in purging his diocess from heretical pravity, he, by the canon of the fourth General Council of Lateran,¶ must be deposed from his episcopal office; and the same punishment is threatened by the General Council of Constance to all Archbishops, Bishops, or Inquisitors who are thus negligent and remiss, and also by the canon law. (Decretal., lib. v., tit. vii., cap. 18.)** "If any Bailiff be negligent in this work, he must lose his goods and be incapable of the office." (Concil. Tolos., can. vii.; Concil. Albiense, can. vii., p. 723.)†† "If any person whatsoever will not execute the sentence of the Inquisitors, he must be compelled to

* Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 609.

† Corp. Juris Canon., tom. ii., Sexti Decret., lib. v., tit. ii., cap. ix., p. 331.

‡ Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 622.

§ Corp. Juris Canon., tom. ii., Sexti Decret., lib. v., tit. ii., cap. xi., p. 332.

‖ Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 604.

¶ Ibid., p. 152.

** Corp. Juris Canonici, tom. ii., lib. v., tit. vii., cap. xviii., p. 333.

†† Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., pp. 482, 723.

it by ecclesiastical censures; and if then he amend not, both his Diocesan and the Inquisitors must proceed against him as a defender and favourer of heretics." * So the Council of Valence. (Can. ix., Concil. Albiense, can. 22.)†

XV. And that no man may dare to give these heretics credit, or show them the least favour, they have decreed, 1. That all who are believers of heretics, or give credence to their errors, shall be condemned and punished as heretics.‡ (Innoc. IV., Const. 27.) Now "such a one is he," says the Provincial Council of Narbonne,§ "who shows them any reverence; who believes that they, continuing in their sect, may be saved, or may be good and holy men, or friends of God, or of good life and conversation, or that they who prosecute them do offend." (Can. 29.) "They are to be reputed favourers of heretics," saith the Provincial Council of Narbonne, "who hinder the correction or extirpation of heretics, and those that believe them, or do not that which, without manifest fault, they cannot omit towards it; they greatly favour them who conceal them when they may and ought to reveal them; they more, who by concealing them maliciously endeavour to hinder their examination, incarceration, or punishment; they most of all, who release them without the consent of the Church, when they are taken or imprisoned, or by whose counsel, aid, or command such things are done: nor are they free from this crime, who, having opportunity of place and time and power to apprehend heretics, or help others so to do, wickedly let it slip, especially when they are required to assist by others that are willing to apprehend them."‖

2. "If any believer, receiver, defender, or favourer of heretics, being excommunicated, do not satisfy (the Church) within a year, he from henceforward shall be infamous, and shall not be admitted to give testimony, or to public offices, or to Councils, or to the election of those that belong to them; he shall have no power of making any will, or succeeding to any inheritance; no man shall be obliged to answer him in any cause, but he shall be compelled to answer others; if he be a Judge, his sentence shall be void and null, nor shall any causes come before him; if an Advocate, he shall not be admitted to plead; if a Clerk or Notary, the instruments drawn by him shall be of no moment."¶ So the Constit. Freder. II. And, lastly, all this is confirmed by the fourth General Council of Lateran in express words. (Cap. 3, de Hereticis.)**

XVI. Moreover, for the security and the encouragement of all such as shall accuse them, (whereas, according to the laws of heathen

* Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 698. † Ibid., p. 726.
‡ Ibid., p. 607. § Ibid., p. 495. ‖ Ibid., p. 492.
¶ Ibid., p. 622. ** Ibid., p. 149.

Rome, no man could be condemned till he had his accusers brought before his face, Acts xxv. 16,) they have decreed that the "names of the accusers of heretics shall not be made public either by word or sign, because this is the pleasure of the Apostolic See.* So Concil. Narbon, can. 22; Concil. Bitter., cap. 10.† And whereas in other cases, by the laws of all nations, notorious criminals, infamous and perjured persons, were not to be admitted to give testimony against others, especially in matters of life and death: all criminals and infamous persons, though partakers with them in their crimes, may be admitted to accuse and testify against the heretics." (Concil. Narbon., can. 24; ‡ Concil. Bitter., cap. 12.)§

XVII. Now, suitably to these decrees and principles, the Pope hath frequently proceeded to deprive civil Governors of their dominions, as being favourers of heretics, or as neglecting to extirpate them out of their territories. For Raimond, Count of Toulouse, was excommunicated by Innocent III.: "because he was a favourer of heretics, his dominions were given by the Pope to any who would seize them. In the year 1210, the citizens of Toulouse were by the Council of Avignon excommunicated, because they neglected to perform what they had promised concerning the expulsion of heretics. In a Council held at Vaur, A.D. 1213, Arnauld, the Pope's Legate, by the apostolic authority, admonished and commanded the King of Arragon to abstain from the protection, defence, or communion of heretics, threatening that otherwise he would pronounce against him the same censures and ecclesiastical punishments which are denounced against them. Yea, the Pope himself informs him, that if he proceeded to be a favourer of heretics, he could not spare him, nor delay his punishment; and that he might, by the example of others who of late had opposed themselves to God and the Church, perceive what great danger hanged over his head." The occasion of all this was, —Peter, King of Arragon, solicits for Raimond, Count of Toulouse, that he might be received into the Church, and for the Counts of Cominges and Fucis, "that they might be restored to their own again." To this the Council answer, "that Count Cominges had made a league with heretics and their favourers, and that the Count of Fucis was a receiver of them, and therefore His Majesty ought not to intercede for them till they have satisfied the Church." Whereupon the King sides with them, endeavouring to obtain by force what by petition he could not obtain. In the year 1214, a Council met at Montpelier of five Archbishops, and twenty-eight Bishops, who choose the Count of Montfort, Prince and Monarch of the dominions of the Count of Toulouse, the forementioned favourer of the Albigenses,

* Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 494. † Ibid., p. 689.
‡ Ibid., p. 494. § Ibid., p. 690.

desiring the Pope's Legate to confirm their choice: he, having no instructions touching this matter, acquaints the Pope with their request, who doth immediately commit to him the custody, and allow him the benefit, of those dominions, referring the matter of the title to the decision of the fourth General Council of Lateran, then called, and the next year assembled, which resolves the case thus: "That the Pope shall absolve the subjects of such favourers of heretics from their allegiance, and expose their territories to be enjoyed by Catholics, who, having destroyed the heretics, shall possess it without any contradiction, so that no injury be done to the principal Lord, who in this case was the French King." * In a Council held in the province of Narbonne, A.D. 1227, "Raimond, the son of Raimond, Count of Toulouse, the Count of Fuciensis, the heretics of Toulouse, and the receivers, believers, favourers, defenders of them, are denounced excommunicate by bell, book, and candle, and are exposed, as it regards their goods and persons, to every one that can seize them."†

A.D. 1281. Martin IV. actually passed sentence of excommunication, incurred against "Michael Palæologus," as being a favourer of those schismatics, "the Greeks, and therefore a maintainer of heretics, and of their heresies and schisms; and, moreover, commanded all Kings, Princes, Dukes, &c., and all other persons, of what dignity, condition, or estate soever, under the penalty of the same excommunication, to make no leagues or confederacies with him; pronouncing all such confederacies null and void, though they have been confirmed with an oath, or by any other firmness whatsoever." ‡

A.D. 1307. Clemens V., by the advice of his brethren, doth pass the very same sentence upon Andronicus Palæologus, the Emperor of the Greeks, for the same crime. A.D. 1326. Castrutius, Governor of Lucca,§ is condemned by the Pope's Legates, as a persecutor of the Church, and a favourer of heretics and schismatics, and is deprived of all his dignities, and exposed to every one that would fall upon him. A.D. 1425. Martin V. pronounced a most heavy and severe sentence against the person and kingdoms of Alphonsus, King of Arragon, as being a favourer of schism.‖ A.D. 1512. Julius II. having notice that the King of Navarre favoured the enemies of the Church, he recurred to that last remedy which is wont to be used against rebellious Princes, execrating the King and Queen of Navarre, depriving them of their dominions, and exciting all Princes to seize upon the common prey. Henry III. of France ¶ spared the blood

* Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part. i., p. 148.

† Ibid., p. 308.

‡ Corp. Juris Canon., tom ii., Extrav. Com., lib. v., tit. x., cap. iii., p. 425.

§ Spondan. Annales, tom. i., p. 582, sect. 2. folio. Paris, 1641.

‖ Ibid., tom. ii., p. 269, sect. 1.

¶ Ibid., p. 851, sect. 23.

of Protestants, and refused to declare his successor incapable of the succession, though he was a Protestant: wherefore, Sixtus V., A.D. 1585, excommunicated him as a manifest favourer of heretics; and granted nine years of indulgence to any of his subjects who would bear arms against him, and absolved them all from their allegiance to him. Upon this his subjects rebelled against him, and Friar Clement murdered him.*

A.D. 1592. Clement VIII. declares, that Henry IV. of France was unworthy of the kingdom, as being a destroyer of the orthodox faith, and a favourer of heretics; and therefore he commands the election of another.† A.D. 1570. Pius V. "declares Queen Elizabeth a heretic, and a favourer of heretics, and for that cause deprived of all dominion, dignity, and privilege whatsoever, and her subjects absolved from their oaths, and from all duty, allegiance, and obedience, by that oath due unto her."‡

XVIII. Let it be then considered, that though Councils join with Popes in the making of canons, yet, by the Constitution of that Church, the Pope alone is he to whom belongs the execution, and the authentic expounding, of those canons, as they must be reduced to practice; and that the Pope is authorized by their Councils,§ both to interpret and to execute their canons during the interval of their sessions. And then, this being well considered, you will find reason to conclude, that their whole Church is very much concerned in what the Popes practise by virtue of those canons, or in pursuance of them. And unless that practice of the Popes in execution of the canons, which is allowed by Councils themselves during the intervals of their sitting, may be reputed the practice of their Church, I cannot imagine how they can impute anything to it which is not done in Councils; and if that only which is done in Councils must be reputed as done by the Church, the Church must be wholly inactive in the intervals, and unable to exercise any authority by virtue of such canons as have no authentic expositor, and no man authorized to execute them.

XIX. Moreover, though any Prince, who hath embraced the Romish faith, shall promise not to prosecute the Protestant subjects according to the tenor of these severe and sanguinary laws, yet cannot his most solemn promises give to them any just security of freedom and exemption from these punishments. This will sufficiently appear, if we consider, 1. That the same impulse of conscience that makes a man a Roman Catholic, will also make him act like one when he hath opportunity to do it: it, therefore, must engage him to believe, that

* Thuani, lib. lxxxii., sect. v., p. 301, Fol., tom. iv. London, 1733.

† Spondan. Annales, tom. ii., p. 739, sect. 4.

‡ Magn. Bullar. Rom., tom. ii., p. 324.

§ Corp. Jur. Canon., tom. i., Decret. I., Pars. Dist., xvii., cap. iv., p. 20.

the decrees of General Councils concerning the punishment of heretics must in themselves be just and equitable, and fit to be observed by him, and that the practice of the whole Roman Church, pursuant to them, for the space of three whole centuries, must be a cogent demonstration of the reception and approbation of those laws throughout all Catholic kingdoms; that he who doth not punish heretics, according as these laws require, must be guilty of the crimes with which these laws do charge him, and well deserves the punishments they have decreed against him; and that whosoever doth exterminate and punish heretics, as they encourage him to do, shall certainly obtain the blessings which they promise to him for that act. How can a Popish Prince abstain from thus reflecting with himself?—"Either the Roman Councils, provincial and general, and the great monarch of the Church, do well in animating and exciting all Roman Catholics to fight against all heretics, expel them out of their dominions, and execute these laws upon them; and in proposing the rewards forementioned, as blessings certainly to be obtained by all who do engage under the banner of the cross for their destruction: and all the Roman Catholics did well, who, in obedience to their commands and expectation of these blessings, hazarded and lost their lives, by their endeavours to extirpate heretics, or who did murder and massacre so many millions of heretics: and, consequently, I also shall do well, and may expect these blessings, by acting as they did:—or else these Popes and Councils, and all those Roman Catholics, who fought or acted, or did encourage others to act thus against heretics, were truly guilty of all the Christian blood which in those wars, between the heretic and Catholic, was spilt, and all the barbarous massacres and horrid murders which have been committed upon them. And if so, why do I own that Church, that Pope, those Councils, who have been guilty of these horrid crimes and these notorious marks of Antichrist; and which hath often sainted, but never in the least discountenanced, but kept communion and good correspondence with, the authors of them?"

2. This further will appear, if we consider that the same principles which oblige a Popish Prince to own that faith, oblige him also to execute these sanguinary laws upon the heretic, whatsoever promises or obligations he hath made to the contrary: that he is subject to a power which can absolve him from all obligations of this nature which he at any time shall make, and concerning which already he hath declared that it is not in his power to make them, or to observe them when they have been made: that they are prejudicial to that superior tribunal of the Church to which he must be subject, and made concerning heresy, of which, as being a spiritual concern, he must not judge, nor of the punishments belonging to it, or of the lawfulness of suspension of those punishments. All this it is easy to demon-

strate. (1.) According to plain reason, when two Princes, who have distinct tribunals, make laws or Constitutions thwarting one another, the Constitutions of the inferior tribunal must give place to those of the superior; but by the principles of the communion of the Roman Church, the ecclesiastical tribunal is superior to that of Princes: since then it is decreed by that tribunal, as we have seen already, that all Catholic Princes shall faithfully endeavour to extirpate heretics from their dominions, and that all Constitutions made to the contrary are *ipso facto* void; no Constitutions made by Princes in favour of heretical subjects can be observed by them, or be of any moment prejudicial to the determinations of the superior tribunal of the Church. Now that, according to the principles of Roman Catholics, the ecclesiastical tribunal is superior to that of Princes, is evident:—

First: From express declarations of the Church in her most general and approved Councils. Ægidius Viterbiensis says, with the great applause and approbation of the fifth Lateran Council under Julius II., that no Kings or Princes can neglect the commands, or refuse the authority, of their General Councils.* The Council of Constance declares, "that, being a General Council, it hath power immediately derived from Christ, which every person, of what state or dignity soever he be, even His Holiness himself, is bound to yield obedience to, in matters which concern faith, the extirpation of the present schism, and the reformation of the Church." The General Council of Basil, in the second session, renews the same decree; and, session 12th, doth challenge, "by virtue of the omnipotent God, immediate power over all faithful Christians;" and, session 33d, declares this to be "a doctrine of the Catholic faith, which he that pertinaciously resists is a heretic;" and, session 45th, affirms, "that it is an article which cannot be neglected, without the loss of salvation."

Second: This will appear from express acts of jurisdiction exercised by the Church over Kings and Princes: for, to omit the frequent excommunications, and sentences of deprivations, passed upon Emperors and Kings in the fourth General Council of Lateran, can. 3; in the General Council of Lyons; in the Council of Pisa, sess. 14; in the General Council of Constance, sess. 12, 17, 37; of Basil, sess. 27, 34, 40, 41;—all which expressly have decreed, that Emperors and Kings, for misdemeanours mentioned there, shall lose their dignity and honour, and be deprived of their government;—I say, to pass by this, they frequently demonstrate their supposed power over them by laying their commands upon them. "We enjoin Princes," saith the fourth Lateran Council, cap. 67; and the Council of Vienna. "We command secular Princes," saith the fourth Lateran Council, cap. 68. "We peremptorily

* Labb. Concilia, tom. xiv., Conc. Constant., sess. 4.

enjoin them," saith Julius II., with the approbation of the fifth Lateran Council. "We command that they be compelled by the secular power," saith the fourth Lateran Council, cap. ult.; and the General Council of Lyons, cap. *super cruciata*.

Third: Their canon law is full of Constitutions to this effect, declaring, that "when the things of God are treated of, the King must study to subject his will to the will of the Priests, and not prefer it before theirs; that the law of Christ subjects Kings to the priesthood of Christ, and puts them under their tribunals; that Christian Emperors ought to subject their executions to the Prelates of the Church, and not prefer them to theirs, because God would have them to be subject to the Priests of the Church." By the same law it is determined, that "Kings must follow the Church form, and not prescribe human laws to her, nor seek to domineer over her Constitutions, but submit their necks to her clemency; and that they ought to yield obedience to the laws of the Church, and not exalt their power above her." *

(2.) According to the principles of that communion, all Princes must submit to, and obey, the definitions of their General Councils, and the determinations of the Church in cases spiritual, because she is their only guide in spirituals: this being, therefore, a spiritual case, (namely, how far the civil Magistrate doth stand obliged to punish heretics,) the Romish Prince must stand to her determination in that matter; and therefore he is obliged to act according to the decrees forementioned, which are firmly established by the Church, whatsoever promises or oaths he may have made unto the contrary. Now that the cause of heresy, and of the punishments to be inflicted on the heretic, is by them judged a spiritual cause, with which the civil power must not intermeddle, is evident from that decree of Boniface V., which strictly forbids "all powers, Lords temporal and Rectors, with their officers, to judge or take cognizance of that crime, it being merely ecclesiastical, or to free them out of prison without the licence of the Bishops or Inquisitors, or to refuse to execute the punishments enjoined by them, or any way directly or indirectly to hinder their process or sentence, under the pain of excommunication, which if they obstinately lie under for a year, they are to be condemned as heretics;" and this decree is taken into the body of the canon law,† and is confirmed by the General Council of Constance, sess. 45. "The crime of heresy must be judged only by the ecclesiastical court, and the secular must not meddle with it." (Gregory XIV., Const. 7, sect. 6.)

(3.) No promises, oaths, or engagements can oblige to the omission of that which is our duty, by the confession of all Christians: they

* Corp. Juris Canon., tom. i., Decret., pars i., Dist. xcvi., cap. xi., xii., p. 118.

† Ibid., tom. ii., Sexti Decret., lib. v., tit. ii., Negotium Inquisitionis, p. 340, *et seq.*

cannot bind, saith their own canon law,* to anything which is against the benefit of holy Church; for, according to the determination of Innocent III., received into the body of that law, "they are not to be called oaths, but perjuries, which are attempted against the benefit of the Church." They cannot bind against the right of a superior; for the same law † declares, that in any oath that is taken, the right of the superior must be supposed to be respected. They cannot bind against the canonical sanctions; "for otherwise," saith the same law, "it is a rash oath, and not valid." Since then, according to the doctrine of the Church, it is the duty of all Catholic Princes to punish and extirpate heretics, they cannot be obliged by any oath or promise to neglect that duty: since this neglect is against law and the canonical sanctions, against the plain determinations of the supreme tribunal, and against the benefit of the holy Church, therefore no oath or promise can oblige them to it. And,

(4.) They who claim a power to absolve Catholic Princes from their contracts, leagues, and engagements made to heretical Princes, must have an equal power to absolve them from contracts made with their own heretical subjects: for, sure, the contracts made with equals must be more firm than those which we have made to our inferiors; but the Pope claims, and oft hath exercised, this power of absolving Catholic Princes from their contracts made with other Princes, on this account, because they were made with heretics, or persons excommunicate. *Ergo*, &c. To give some few examples;—the Bull of Urban VI. concerning this matter, runs thus: "Amongst the many cares with which we continually are pressed, our chief concernment is, to provide fit remedies for preventing the subversion of the faithful, by consorting or by participating with schismatics or heretics; and truly we have lately heard," saith he, "that Wencelaus, King of the Romans and Bohemians, and Charles the Emperor, have entered into some confederacies, leagues, compacts, or conventions, with divers Kings, Princes, Dukes, Earls, grandees, and nobles; some of which Kings, &c., then were, or afterwards have become, manifest heretics and schismatics, being separated from the union of the Roman Church, though not by us declared such: we, therefore, considering that such confederacies, leagues, compacts, or conventions, made with these heretics and schismatics, after they were such, are rash, void, and null by sentence of the law; but if they were made before their falling into schism and heresy, and confirmed by an oath, or by the Apostolic See, or by whatsoever firmness, as soon as they become guilty of these crimes, the King, and all that with him have entered into these compacts, is absolved from the observation of

* Corp. Juris Canon., tom. i., Decret. Greg. ix., lib. ii., tit. xxiv., cap. 27, p. 110.
† Ibid., lib. v., tit. xxiv., cap. xix., p. 109.

them, and ought not to observe them; therefore, we, by our apostolical authority, declare the said King absolved from them, and the compacts themselves to be wholly void and null." Pope Martin V., * in his epistle to Alexander, Duke of Lithuania, who had received the Bohemians into his protection, writes thus: "If thou hast been any ways induced to promise to defend them, know, that thou couldst not pawn thy faith to heretics, the violators of the holy faith; and that thou mortally offendest, if thou dost observe it."†

When Uladislaus,‡ King of Hungary, had made peace with Amurath the Turk, for ten years, and had confirmed it with an oath, the Pope, Eugenius IV.,§ writes to Julian the Cardinal, to persuade him to violate that peace, alleging and declaring, "that no league made with the enemies of the Christian faith, without consulting with the Pope, is valid:" hereupon the poor King is prevailed with to become a most perfidious wretch, and fall upon the Turk unawares; which he observing, and being straitened in his arms, pulls out the articles of the covenant, and, looking up to heaven, cries out, "O crucified Jesus, see the perfidiousness of this nation, which, against their oath, have violated all right and faith; and if thou art a God, do thou revenge this perjury upon them;" which was no sooner said, but the Christians were put to flight, the perjured King, and the Cardinal who persuaded him to violate his oath, were both slain; God teaching us by this example, saith Æneas Sylvius, that oaths are to be kept, when made, not only with the faithful, but with enemies.‖ Pope Innocent III.,¶ in his epistle to Peter, King of Arragon, writes thus: "We enjoin thy serenity, by virtue of the Holy Spirit, that thou desert the forenamed people of Toulouse, and that thou do not afford them any counsel, aid, or favour, whilst they continue as they are, notwithstanding any promise or obligation whatsoever made unto them, in elusion of the ecclesiastical discipline." Paul III., in his Bull against Henry VIII., edit. A.D. 1538, "exhorts and requireth, in the Lord, all Christian Princes shining in imperial or regal dignity, that they do not, under pretence of any confederations or obligations whatsoever, although corroborated by frequently-repeated oaths, or any other firmness," I say he doth exhort them, "not to yield to King Henry, his accomplices, favourers, adherers, consulters or followers, or any of them, by themselves or others, openly or secretly, directly or indirectly, tacitly or expressly, any counsel, aid, or favour;" and that

* Spond. Annales, tom. ii., p. 255, sect. 1.

† Cochlei Hist. Hussitar., lib. v., p. 212, A.D. 1423, fol. Mogunt., 1549.

‡ Ibid., p. 428, sect. 3.

§ Ibid., p. 341, sect. 10.

‖ Ant. Bonfinii, Rerum Ungar., Decad. v., lib. iii., fol. Basil., 1568.

¶ Labb. Concilia, tom. xi., part i., p. 93.

they might not think themselves obliged so to do, he "absolves them all from all oaths or obligations, made or to be made unto him or them, and declares them to be void and null, and of no strength and moment." And, lastly, Pius V. absolves not only all the subjects of Queen Elizabeth, but also "all others who had in any sort sworn to her."

(5.) They who claim a power to absolve subjects from these promises and oaths by which they were obliged to yield obedience to their heretical Princes, must have an equal power to absolve Catholic Princes from their promises and oaths made to heretical subjects; for, sure, the obligation of Princes to their subjects cannot be greater than that of subjects to their Prince. Now it is known that Roman Popes and Councils claim the power of absolving subjects from that obedience which they have sworn to yield to their heretical superiors: *ergo*, by the same principles, they must have power to absolve Catholic Princes from those promises and oaths which they have made to their heretical subjects. To give some instances of this kind: "Let them know," saith Gregory IX.,* "who were bound by any bond, how firm soever, to persons manifestly fallen into heresy, that they are absolved from that fidelity, obedience, and homage which they were obliged to pay;" and this decree is put into the body of the canon law, and hath, according to Singleton,† been commended and observed in the Church practice about four hundred years. The truth and modesty of which assertion, as to the limitation of it to four hundred years, will be abundantly made good by the following:—

In the eighth century, Sigonius‡ and others inform us, that "Rome and the Roman duchy were lost by the Grecians, by reason of their wicked heresy, and fell into the hands of the Pope of Rome." The "wicked heresy" of Leo Isaurus, which lost him the empire of the West, was this, that he forbade the adoration of images, and pulled them down everywhere; for this Gregory II. persuades the Italians to revolt from him, as being a heretic, he absolves them from their oaths of obedience, and strictly forbids them to pay him any tribute; whereupon they, rejecting the Emperor, do bind themselves by oath to be obedient to the Pope. This is the title by which the Pope holds Rome at present, even plain rebellion and tyrannical invasion of his Sovereign's estate and dominions. "Now by this action," saith Baronius, "he left to posterity a worthy example, that heretical Princes should not be suffered to reign in the Church of Christ, if, being warned, they were found pertinacious in

* Corpus Juris Canon., tom. i., Decret. Greg. ix., lib. v., tit. vii., cap. xvi., p. 241.

† Singleton Discuss. Decret. Con. Lat., p. 98.

‡ Sigon. De Regno Italiæ, lib. iii., fol. Hanov., 1609.

error." * The next successor of Gregory II. was Gregory III.,† who, "as soon as he had obtained the Papal dignity, by the consent of the Roman Clergy, deprived Leo III., Emperor of Constantinople, both of his empire and the communion of the faithful, because he had swept away the holy images out of the Church."

In the eleventh century, Gregory VII.‡ writes thus: "Either King Philip of France, rejecting the filthy merchandise of simoniacal heresy, will permit fit persons to be chosen into the government of the Church, or the French will refuse to obey him any longer, unless they had rather cast away the Christian faith, being smitten with the sword of a general anathema." Where it is plainly to be seen, that the Pope supposes heresy to be a crime sufficient, not only to justify subjects in their refusal of obedience to their lawful Prince, but also to justify him in excluding them from the communion of Christians who obey him.

In the twelfth century, to give the better colour to the depositions of Henry IV. and Henry V., it was first voted in the Council held at the Lateran, 1102, "that it was heresy to assert the right of laymen to invest into ecclesiastical preferments." And this decree was renewed in a Council at Vienna, A.D. 1112, and by another held at the Lateran, A.D. 1116; and in pursuance of these decrees were these two Emperors deposed. But, notwithstanding all the thunderings of Paschal II. against Henry IV., the Church of Leon stood firm to him, which so incensed the good Pope, that he writes to Robert, Count of Flanders, to expel those schismatics out of the Church. His words are these: § "It is just, that they who have separated themselves from the Catholic Church should be separated from the Church's benefices: wheresoever, therefore, thou art able, do thou persecute Henry, the head of the heretics, and all his favourers, with all thy might; for truly thou canst offer no more acceptable sacrifice to God, than by impugning him who hath lifted up himself against God; who, by the judgment of the Holy Spirit," (O horrid blasphemy!) "is cast out of the house of God by the Princes of the Apostles and their Vicars: this we command thee to do for the obtaining the remission of thy sins, and the familiarities of the Apostolic See;" which, as it seems, cannot be more effectually obtained by anything than by rebelling against heretical Princes, and persecuting them with all our might.

In the thirteenth century, in the year of our Lord 1245, Pope Innocent IV. assembles a General Council at Lyons, where he declares the Emperor Frederick II. guilty of heresy,‖ "because he violated

* Baronii Annales, A.D. 730, sect. 40, p. 98, fol., tom. ix. Romæ, 1600.
† Platina De Vitis Pontificum, Greg. III., p. 110, folio, Colon., 1568.
‡ Labb. Concilia, tom. x., p. 34, Epistolæ Greg. VII., lib. i., epist. 35.
§ Ibid., p. 629, Paschal II., epist. vii.
‖ Ibid., tom. xi., part i., p. 645.

his oath; and because he diminished the privilege granted to the successors of St. Peter, in these words, 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth,' &c.; and contemned the keys of the Church; which," saith he, "must be heresy, seeing the civil law declares him a heretic, and worthy to be punished as such, who in a light matter doth deviate from Catholic religion." Then follows his deposition of the Emperor in these words: "We, therefore, after mature deliberation had with our Cardinals, and with the sacred Council, upon the premisses, declare the forementioned Emperor —— deprived by God of all honour and dignity, and by our sentence we deprive him of them, perpetually absolving all his subjects from their oaths of fidelity to him, and by our apostolical authority forbidding them to acknowledge or obey him hereafter as Emperor or King; and decreeing, that all who under that relation yield him counsel, aid, or favour shall be *ipso facto* excommunicate."

A.D. 1254. Innocent IV. pronounceth an anathema, on Maundy Thursday, against Ecelinus, Governor of Marchia Tarvisina, as being a manifest heretic, and frequently excommunicated on that account. And, A.D. 1256, he gathers an army of Crusadoes against him.*

In the fourteenth century, A.D. 1322, John XXII. excommunicates Matthew, Viscount of Milan, his sons and abettors, as being heretics and schismatics; passeth upon them the sentence of deprivation of all their goods, deposition from all office and dignity, ecclesiastical and secular, and of inability to any other; and exposes their persons to be seized upon; and treats with Frederick of Austria, King of the Romans, about sending an army into Lombardy to suppress them.†

A.D. 1324. John XXII. commands Lewis of Bavaria to cease from all administration of the empire, and never to assume it again, without the approbation of the Apostolic See; and this was done, as for other reasons, so in particular this, that Lewis had showed favour and patronage to Count Galeatius and his brethren, who had been lawfully condemned for heresy, and to some others who had rebelled against the Church. ‡ A.D. 1324. This Pope pronounces the Emperor contumacious, and deprived of all right to the empire; reserving to himself the inflicting of other penalties upon him, if ever he endeavour to meddle with the administration of the empire, or should presume to favour the forementioned heretics and rebels, forbidding all the subjects of the empire, under the most grievous penalties, in any manner to obey him, to call him Emperor, or yield him any aid or favour. A.D. 1335. § Benedict XXII. renews this sentence

* Spondan. Annales, A.D. 1254, tom. i., sect. 3.
† Ibid., tom. i., A.D. 1322, sect. v., p. 564.
‡ Ibid., A.D. 1324, sect. ii., p. 574.
§ Ibid., A.D. 1335, sect. i., p. 631.

of John. And the next year the Emperor makes a large promise of doingalmost anything the Pope would ask, and giving power to his own subjects to rise up against him if he did not perform it; and yet this was not thought sufficient to expiate the guilt of favouring heretics and rebels to the Church of Rome, and doing that which was at Rome esteemed heresy. He therefore proceeds to confess, that he had done ill in favouring the Viscount of Milan and others, condemned by the Church as heretics and schismatics; that, in his appeal made against John XXII., he had said many heretical things; that he would make a full confession of these things, and would supplicate for absolution; and take an oath, *stare mandatis Ecclesiæ*, to obey the commands of the Church, and to extirpate heretics: and yet all this would not prevail for the obtaining of his pardon. A.D. 1343. Clement VI. renews the same sentence against the Emperor; and the conditions which he required, in order to his absolution, were, that he should confess his heresies and errors, of which he was accused; and that he should resign the empire, not resuming it, but by the favour of the Pope; that he should deliver up his sons, goods, and his whole concerns, into the hands and will of the Pope; all which the Emperor promised to do: and yet this would not satisfy.

Such is the Church of Rome. We write considerately, inasmuch as she has not renounced the principles that received the stamp of infallibility in bygone days. Dr. Delahogue, in his class-book for the instruction of the Priests educated at Maynooth, states, that the Church holds her jurisdiction over all baptized persons, as a commander retains authority over deserters, and may decree for them severe punishments. The worst and bitterest persecutors are canonized and beatified as saints in the Romish Church. St. Dominic, Thomas Aquinas, (whose *Secunda Secundæ* is replete with persecuting principles,) Ferdinand of Castile, and Pius V., are embalmed in the devotions of, and exhibited as models to, the Roman Catholics of Britain. To warn the Protestants of the unchangeable character of the Papacy, is the object of the following volumes.

MARTYROLOGIA,

&c.

BOOK I.

OF THE PERSECUTIONS RECORDED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER I.

SECT. I. ABEL, B.C. 3875—*Birth of Cain—His Character—The Occupation of the Brothers—Cause of Difference—Nature of the Offerings presented—Sacrifices—The Contrast—Effect upon Cain—Who murders his Brother—Records of Targums*—SECT. II. ABRAHAM—*Moral State of the World at his Birth—His early Character—The Idolatry of Terah—Zabiism—Rise and Progress of the primitive Idolatry—Rabbinical Tradition—Terah a Maker of Idols—Abraham reproves his Father—Is examined and punished by Nimrod.*

SECTION I.—THE MARTYRDOM OF ABEL.

WE cannot direct our attention to this melancholy event without acknowledging the awful fact, that when holiness of life has been abandoned and trampled upon, the heart of man eagerly gives entrance to every species of iniquity. In Cain, the near kinsman and murderer of Abel, we behold the first specimen of the conduct of a son and a brother. In the former relationship we meet with the primary example of disobedience to an earthly parent. Eve, doubtless, rejoiced in his birth. What she thought and felt upon this interesting occasion, we learn from what she said, and from the name which she gave to her new-born son, in token of her gladness in having "gotten a man from the Lord." With a heart teeming with gratitude she would look up to God, who had not only prolonged and spared her life, but had made her the joyful mother of a living child, and who, though, according to the curse, he had multiplied her sorrow, yet had not refused to administer to her consolation. She would also rejoice in the birth of Cain as an earnest of the accomplishment of the promise of the Redeemer from among her seed, who should bruise the serpent's head. How soothing to the maternal heart must have been the hope of relief and deliverance through the instrumentality of her offspring! And how gratefully would she meditate upon thus repairing the ruin which she, through frailty, had induced, little contemplating that fearful developement of evil in him, for the destruction of which she was earnestly looking!

We have to regard Cain as a brother. Of the early life and deportment of these children little is said in the sacred records; but from the sequel we are led to conclude the juvenile career of the elder could not have been happy. By personal experience he knew nothing of the height from whence he had fallen. He had been taught from infancy the nature of the primitive transgression, and he could not have been altogether an unconcerned witness of the lamentation and tears which fell from the guilty, but now repenting, pair; the supplications and prayers which were uttered at the footstool of Mercy's throne would be familiar to him; the frequent comparisons which they might be expected to institute between their present and former state, one might have imagined, would have excited a deep and thrilling interest even in the heart of Cain; and the name of the promised Mediator and Redeemer, which his parents uttered with reverential gratitude, as their only consolation and hope, would doubtless excite his attention, while it raised in his mind sentiments of fear, mingled with desire to know more respecting him.

Cain was a husbandman, Abel was a shepherd. "Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground." (Gen. iv. 2.) Such the fruit of sin. The sons arrive at manhood, at the age of reason, vigour, and activity, and feel the law of God and of nature resting on them. Though the earthly lords of creation, they must obtain a livelihood by the sweat of the face. (Gen. iii. 19.) The earth no longer yields spontaneously her increase. The land must be ploughed, and the grain cast in the furrow through the care and labour of man, else in vain will the heavens pour upon it their fertilizing showers, or the blessing of the Most High be sought. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." (Gen. iii. 17, 18.) That the cattle, also, those innocent partakers of man's woe, may furnish their fleece for clothing, or their milk for food, they must be protected from the inclemency of the weather, and the fangs of ravenous beasts; they must be led to suitable pasture, and to the brook. Hence the first employment of our progenitors. It has been observed, that "the different dispositions of the brothers may be traced in the occupations which they followed. Pious and contemplative, Abel tends his flock; his profession affords more retirement, and more leisure for meditation; and the very nature of his charge forms him to vigilance, to providence, and to sympathy. His prosperity and success seem to flow immediately and only from the hand of God. Cain, more worldly and selfish, betakes himself to husbandry, a work of greater industry and art; the necessary implements of which suppose the prior invention of sundry branches of manufacture; and in whose operations and their effects, art, blending with nature, would claim at least her full proportion of merit and importance. But it is not the *occupation* which has merit or demerit, the man who exercises it is the object of censure or praise. It is not the husbandry of Cain, but wicked Cain the husbandman, that we blame: it is not the shepherd's life, but good Abel the shepherd, we esteem. 'And in process of time it came to

pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.' (Gen. iv. 3—5.)"*

What constituted the difference? In attempting to answer this question, we shall discover that the first murder, with the blood of which the earth was polluted, was the result of a religious dispute. Cain had the weakest argument, and greater power, which he hesitated not to employ in the destruction of his opponent. From that time to the present, all religious persecution has commenced and been carried forward on the same principle. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." (Gal. v. 17.)

The respective nature and quality of the offerings presented could not have made the difference concerning which we inquire. We must penetrate deeper. Cain had evidently profited but little by the precept and example of his parents. Pride appears to have blinded his eyes and hardened his heart, which refused to acknowledge the degradation of his nature. From his subsequent conduct, it appears that he regarded the transgression of his parents as purely their own, and terminating entirely in them. What had he to do with it, who was not then in the world? How was he accountable for any part of its consequences? They might have fallen from their primitive state, as they said they had; but he himself was as God had made him, and what more could be demanded? They, as having violated and lost their nature, might want a Redeemer to repair and restore it; but he had ever continued in that condition in which he at first was made, and he was thankful for it, and desired scarcely a better. What need, then, had he of a Redeemer? his very worst sin could be but the developement of that nature in the assignment of which to him he had had no choice. Thankful for the blessings with which God had surrounded him, he asked not forgiveness; he could not believe himself accountable for his varied actions, therefore he beheld no sin of which he had been guilty that needed an atonement, much less to require an atonement from without, through inability to make due satisfaction himself.

Ere long a day arrived which tested the rectitude of these principles. Adam, and in him his descendants, had been commanded to signify their estimate of sin, of which death was the penalty, and their hope of pardon through a Redeemer, by means of the lively figure of a slaughtered animal offered to God in prayer and thanksgiving. A day was probably set apart for this purpose, on which all the members of the primitive family were gathered together to present an offering. Some are led to imagine that this day was the anniversary of creation: it is, however, even more than probable that it was the Sabbath on which Adam and his household offered oblations to God: divine worship was doubtless instituted, and the sacred day properly

* Hunter's Sacred Biography, vol. i., pp. 76, 77. 8vo. Fourth Edit. London, 1792.

observed in the family. This worship, in its original institution, was confessedly simple: it consisted of two parts; namely, thanksgiving to God as the Author and Dispenser of all the bounties of nature, and oblations indicative of that gratitude; and also *piacular* sacrifices to his justice and holiness, implying a conviction of their own sinfulness, confessions of transgression, and faith in the promised Deliverer.

"Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, an offering."—Thus acknowledging God as the bountiful Donor, and making a thanksgiving; but expressing no consciousness of sin, no faith in the appointed atonement. Not so the presentation of Abel. "He brought of the firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof;" and in the act of laying them on the altar, he acknowledged his guilty and fallen state, confessed his transgression, and, through the medium of the bleeding victim before him, he beheld by faith the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, abundantly establishes this fact. "By FAITH Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." (Heb. xi. 4.) Cain came before God as a righteous man; Abel, as a sinner. Cain brought an offering of acknowledgment; Abel, a propitiatory sacrifice. Cain's gift bespoke a grateful heart; Abel's, a contrite spirit. Cain beholds the goodness of God only; Abel, his mercy and long-suffering. Cain, in effect, says, "Lord, I thank thee for all thy benefits towards me;" Abel, in the language of one of his posterity, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant." (Gen. xxxii. 10.) Cain rejoices in the world as a goodly portion; Abel, by faith, discerns and anticipates a better inheritance. Cain draws near with his offering, trusting in an imperfect righteousness of his own, and departs unjustified; Abel approaches depending on the merit of a Saviour who was to appear, and retires, having "obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." (Heb. xi. 4.)

The divine approval of the first believer of all born in sin, by some special token, and the manifest rejection of the offering of the first deist, stung the proud and rebellious heart of Cain. A fierce malignity took possession of him on account of the preference shown by the Most High, whom he had wilfully disobeyed. "God condescended to remonstrate with him, and asked him, when his countenance fell with the scowl of discontent upon it, 'Why art thou angry and fallen of countenance? With all things wherewith thou truly endeavourest to please me, will I not be pleased? And for those things, in which thou neither hast pleased me, nor canst please me, have I not provided, by covenanting to accept a sin-offering? Is not this ever at hand? Why, then, was it not offered? And why be angry with thy brother? He shall still be subject to thee as younger to elder. The mark of my approbation will make no difference in this respect; I have not subjected thee to him.' But when the spirit of selfishness within a man is roused, vain is all expostulation from without; unheard the warning voice of man, of angel, and of God. So blind, so deluding, is this spirit; occupied in contem-

plating its own worthiness, it attends to nothing else. It is at once both worshipper and worshipped; and self-love, self-admiration, take the place of love towards God, and charity to man. Everything, therefore, which for a moment stands in the way of its lust and pride is an intolerable grievance, is the instrument of a tyranny which must by every means be resisted and overthrown. Cain listened not to God, but kept his ear exclusively open to the complaints of his own malignant spirit. Over the imaginary wrongs which it continually suggested, he brooded, until the abominable nestlings were full fledged, and their flight was immediately towards their prey." *

"When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James i. 15.) Cain, jealous of the preference which was given to the offering of his brother, became the slave of a fiery persecuting spirit, and determined on the destruction of his rival; and thus exhibited to future generations what the true faith has ever to anticipate from those who trample upon and oppose the truth as it is in Jesus.

On the subject of the martyrdom of Abel, the Scriptures record little more than the fact. It is there stated, that "Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." (Gen. iv. 8.) There is some obscurity in this passage, and a breach of analogy and grammatical accuracy. What is here wanting is supplied in the principal ancient versions of the Scriptures, especially in the Samaritan,† and may safely be considered as belonging to the original text. According to the reading alluded to, the passage would stand thus, "And Cain said unto Abel his brother, *Let us go out into the field;* and it came to pass when they were in the field, that Cain rose up," &c. The natural conclusion at which we must arrive with regard to this awful transaction, is, that Cain requested Abel to accompany him to the field, and when he had inveigled him to a distance from home and from help, he rose upon him, and slew him.

Some of the ancient Jewish writers enter into detail, and profess not merely to state the manner in which the murderous assault was made, but also the conversation of the two brothers immediately preceding the event. It is found in the Jerusalem Targum, and also in the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel, and is as follows:—

"And Cain said unto Hebel, his brother, 'Let us go out into the field;' and it came to pass that, when they were in the field, Cain answered and said to Hebel, his brother, 'I thought that the world

* Scripture Biography. By the Rev. Robert W. Evans, M.A. Second series. 12mo. pp. 9, 10. London. 1835.

† "The Syriac has, *Let us go to the desert.* The Vulgate, *Egrediamur foras*, 'Let us walk out.' The Septuagint, Διελθωμεν εις το πεδιον, 'Let us go out into the field.' The two Chaldee Targums have the same reading, so has the Coptic version. This addition is completely lost from every MS. of the Pentateuch now known; and yet it is sufficiently evident, from the Samaritan text, the Samaritan version, the Syriac, Septuagint, and Vulgate, that it was in the most authentic copies of the Hebrew before, and some time since, the Christian era."—*Dr. A. Clarke, in loco.*

was created in mercy; but it is not governed according to the merit of good works, nor is there any judgment, nor a judge, nor shall there be any future state in which good rewards shall be given to the righteous, or punishment executed on the wicked; and *now*, there is respect of persons in judgment. On what account is it that thy sacrifice has been accepted, and mine not received with complacency?' And Hebel answered and said, 'The world was created in mercy, and it is governed according to the fruit of good works; there is a judge, a future world, and a coming judgment, where good works shall be given to the righteous, and the impious punished; and there is no respect in judgment; but because my works were better, and more precious than thine, my oblation was received with complacency.' And because of these things they contended on the face of the field; and Cain rose up against Hebel, his brother, and struck a stone into his forehead, and killed him."

"It is here supposed," observes Dr. A. Clarke, "that the first death which occurred in the world was the result of religious dissension: however *this* may have been, millions since have been sacrificed to prejudice, bigotry, and intolerance. Here certainly originated the many-headed monster, *religious persecution:* the spirit of the wicked one, in his followers, impels them to afflict and destroy all those who are partakers of the Spirit of God. Every persecutor is a legitimate son of the old murderer. This is the first triumph of Satan: it is not merely a death that he has introduced, but a violent one, as the first-fruits of sin. It is not the death of an ordinary person, but of the most holy man then in being; it is not brought about by the providence of God, or by a gradual failure and destruction of the earthly fabric, but by a violent separation of body and soul; it is not done by a common enemy, from whom nothing better could be expected, but by the hand of a brother; and for no other reason, but because the object of his envy was more righteous than himself. Alas! how exceeding sinful does sin appear in its first manifestation!"

SECTION II.—OF ABRAHAM.

ACCORDING to the testimony of ancient Jewish Scribes, Abraham, the father of the faithful, suffered on account of his belief in the most high God. Previous to his birth there was a fearful departure from primitive purity, and an increasing licentiousness. The descendants of Ham fell deeply into this abominable apostasy. It greatly infected the descendants of Japheth, and also of Shem. Some of the posterity of the latter resided in a country which was contiguous to that of Ham, in Ur of the Chaldees, which lay between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris; and here it was that Terah, the eighth of the descendants of Shem, was worshipping other gods than the true. "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods." (Joshua xxiv. 2.)

Jehovah, who never left himself without witness, however dense

and extensive the gloom which enveloped the moral world, graciously interfered to preserve his truth from complete and final annihilation. Terah had three sons, Abram, Nahor, and Haran. The first of these was chosen by the Almighty, through whom his church was to be transmitted to succeeding ages, and the gracious promise vouchsafed to the common parent of all, forwarded to those who hereafter should believe. We have no definite proof that Abraham, even in early life, was an idolater: when he received his call, he was a worshipper of the one true God. Instances are exceedingly rare of any other character being appointed to responsible and important offices in the church. The case of the Apostle Paul is by no means parallel. "He was not called back from idolatry to the anciently established truth. He was not living in a transmitted apostasy, but was converted from the literal observance of a religion established by God himself, to the newly-revealed spirit of that religion." * The Almighty invariably has maintained the existence of his church in the world in times the most dark and troublous: were it otherwise, the hallowed community would have undergone a total and complete interruption, which has never happened, and the revelation which was made to Abraham would have been totally independent of the original promise made to Adam; it would not have been a renewal and extension of the grant, but one altogether new. Every view which we may take of the passage of Abraham's life, now under consideration, leads to the firm and consistent conclusion, that "the father of the faithful" was free even from the stain of idolatry, when he received his call.

The idolatry of Terah was notorious. In the neighbourhood of Ur, the residence of this Patriarch, the country is open, dry, and barren, well suited for pasture, but not for tillage. In the spacious and level plains of Chaldea, where the nights are delightfully cool and serene, a pastoral people would naturally be led to contemplate the heavenly bodies with peculiar attention. To this country the first rudiments of astronomy are generally ascribed; and here the earliest form of idolatry, the worship of the host of heaven, usually called "Zabiism," began to spread.† The Arabian traditions sup-

* Evans's Sacred Biography, p. 47.

† It is not probable that they fell at once into the grossest kind of idolatry; but, from making observations on the celestial bodies, they declined into judicial astrology; then to imagine the sun, moon, and stars living and intelligent beings; then as subordinate, and, finally, as principal, deities; thus was the worship of God discarded, and polytheism introduced. This species of iniquity rapidly spread, and was called "Zabiism;" and the followers of such a system were designated "Zabii," or "Zabians," who maintained that the stars are divinities; that the sun is the chief deity; that the five planets are gods, but the two great luminaries are superior ones; and that the sun governs both the upper and the lower world. Intimations of the existence of this superstition are found in the Mosaic account of the creation, where much of the beauty and interest of the narrative is lost from want of acquaintance with the history of the times in which Moses wrote. That historian emphatically says, "*He made the stars also.*" (Gen. i. 16.) "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, *and all the host of them;*" (Gen. ii. 1;) as if he had said, "The gods which the Zabii worship are inferior to Jehovah, for he made them." Job, also, vindicates himself from such wickedness by a very strong and solemn asseveration. (Job xxxi. 26—28.) In process of time these idolatrous practices spread to the most distant parts of the inhabited world; they

pose that a farther step had been already taken, and represent Terah, the father of Abraham, as a maker of images, called, from his name, "Teraphim." Other legends attribute to this period the origin of fire-worship. But whatever the system or systems of religion, in whatever manner he acquired his purer notions of the Deity,* Abraham stood alone in a tribe and family of idolaters as the worshipper of the one great Creator.†

That Abraham should have abstained from idolatry, will not appear singular, when we consider the peculiar privileges with which he was favoured. In that day of moral darkness and sterility, the worship of Jehovah was not utterly abandoned. Laban, actually supported idolatry in close connexion with the worship of the true God. (Compare Gen. xxiv. 21, 50, with Gen. xxxi. 19.) Abraham, probably from his earliest years of understanding, had heard the preaching of Shem, who (according to the Hebrew chronologists) survived by many years the transmigration of Terah; nor can we suppose that the faithful patriarch saw with indifference the progress of idolatry among his kinsfolk, and that he did not declare with untiring zeal and diligence the truth of divine revelation, and with tears of poignant sorrow, and feelings of holy indignation, the denunciations of divine wrath. It is at this period of the history of Abraham, that the persecution to which our attention is directed took place. It is found in the traditionary records of the Jewish church, but inherits so much of what is fabulous and legendary, that the account is only viewed in the light of a curious and antique document, and calculated to amuse rather than instruct. As such, it is presented to our readers.

infected not only the eastern and western Scythians and Tartars, but the Mexicans too; for there the Spaniards found them when they first came to America. The Canaanites were singularly addicted to them, which is the reason that they, as the Egyptians, gave such names to their cities as Beth-shemesh, or "the house or temple of the sun:" (Joshua xv. 10:) Mount Heres, or "the mountain of the sun:" (Judges i. 35:) Timnath-heres, or "the image of the sun;" which, agreeably to the command, (Exod. xxiii. 13; Joshua xxiii. 7,) was changed into Timnath-serah, or "the image of wantonness;" but when the Israelites fell into idolatry, the old name was resumed. Relics of this superstition are found in the present day in the island of Ceylon, in Ireland, and Scotland, and even in this country, among those who pretend to foretell, by the motions of the stars, the adverse or prosperous circumstances of men, and among the horde of nativity-casters, horoscope-makers, &c., whose practices are degrading to man, and insulting to God. For an account of these idolaters the reader may consult an interesting paper in the Methodist Magazine, vol. xlv., p. 504, *et seq.*; a dissertation prefixed to a work entitled, the Reasons of the Laws of Moses, from the *More Nevochim* of Maimonides, both from the pen of the late Dr. James Townley; Young on Idolatrous Corruptions of Religion, vol. i., pp. 55, 56, &c.

* One of the most pleasing of the traditionary fictions with regard to Abraham is the following:—"As he was walking by night from the grotto where he was born to the city of Babylon, he gazed on the stars of heaven, and among them on the beautiful planet Venus. 'Behold,' said he within himself, 'the God and Lord of the universe!' but the star set and disappeared; and Abraham felt that the Lord of the universe could not thus be liable to change. Shortly after, he beheld the moon at the full: 'Lo!' he cried, 'the divine Creator, the manifest Deity!' but the moon sank below the horizon, and Abraham made the same reflection as at the setting of the evening star. All the rest of the night he passed in profound rumination; at sunrise he stood before the gates of Babylon, and saw the whole people prostrate in devotion. 'Wondrous orb,' he exclaimed, 'Thou, surely, art the creator and ruler of all nature! but thou, too, hastest like the rest to thy setting! neither, then, art thou my Creator, my Lord, or my God!'"

† History of the Jews, vol. i., p. 7.

"Terah, the father of Abraham," says tradition, "was not only an idolater, but a manufacturer of idols, which he used to expose for public sale. Being obliged one day to go out on particular business, he desired Abraham to superintend for him. Abraham obeyed reluctantly. 'What is the price of that god?' asked an old man who had just entered the place of sale, pointing to an idol to which he took a fancy. 'Old man,' said Abraham, 'may I be permitted to ask thine age?' 'Three-score years,' replied the age-stricken idolater. 'Three-score years!' exclaimed Abraham, 'and thou wouldest worship a thing that has been fashioned by the hands of my father's slaves, within the last four-and-twenty hours? Strange that a man of sixty should be willing to bow down his grey head to a creature of a day!' The man was overwhelmed with shame, and went away. After this there came a grave and sedate matron, carrying in her hand a large dish with flour. 'Here,' said she, 'have I brought an offering to the gods. Place it before them, and bid them be propitious to me.' 'Place it before them thyself, foolish woman,' said Abraham: 'thou wilt soon see how greedily they will devour it.' She did so; in the mean time, Abraham took a hammer, broke the idols in pieces, all excepting the largest, in whose hands he placed the instrument of destruction. Terah returned, and with the utmost surprise and consternation, beheld the havoc amongst his favourite gods. 'What is all this, Abraham? What profane wretch has dared to use our gods in this manner?' exclaimed the infatuated and indignant Terah. 'Why should I conceal anything from my father?' replied the pious son. 'During thine absence there came a woman with yonder offering for the gods. She placed it before them. The younger gods, who, as may be well supposed, had not tasted food for a long time, greedily stretched forth their hands and began to eat, before the old god had given them permission. Enraged at their boldness, he rose, took the hammer, and punished them for their want of respect.' 'Dost thou mock me? Wilt thou deceive thy aged father?' exclaimed Terah in a vehement rage. 'Do I then not know that they can neither eat, nor stir, nor move?' 'And yet,' rejoined Abraham, 'thou payest them divine honours—adorest them, and wouldest have me worship them!' It was in vain Abraham thus reasoned with his idolatrous parent. Superstition is ever both deaf and blind. His unnatural father delivered him over to the cruel tribunal of the equally idolatrous Nimrod. But a more merciful Father—the gracious and blessed Father of us all—protected him against the threatened danger; and Abraham became the father of the faithful.

"Abraham, being brought before Nimrod, was urged by the tyrant to worship the fire. 'Great King,' said the father of the faithful, 'would it not be better to worship the *water?* it is mightier than fire, having the power to extinguish it.' 'Worship the water, then,' said Nimrod. 'Methinks,' rejoined Abraham, 'it would be more reasonable to worship the *clouds*, since they carry the waters, and throw them down upon the earth.' 'Well, then,' said the impatient King, 'worship the clouds, which, by thine own confession, possess great power.' 'Nay,' continued Abraham, 'if power is to be the

object of adoration, the preference ought to be given to the *wind*, which by its greater force, scatters the clouds, and drives them before it.' 'I see,' said Nimrod, 'we shall never have done with this prattler: worship the wind, then, and we will pardon thy former profanations.' 'Be not angry, great King,' said Abraham: 'I cannot worship the fire, nor the water, nor the clouds, nor the wind, nor any of the things thou callest *gods*. The power they possess is derived from a Being, not only most powerful, but full of *mercy* and *love*; the Creator of heaven and earth, Him alone will I worship.' 'Well, then,' said the tyrant, 'since thou refusest to adore the fire, thou shalt speedily be made sensible of its mighty force.' He ordered Abraham to be thrown into a fiery furnace; but God delivered him from the raging flames, and made him a source of blessing to many nations." We leave this tale where we found it, in the *Medrash Bereshith Rabah*.*

CHAPTER II.

SECT. I. *The Captivity in Egypt—Joseph—Cause of his Elevation—The Famine—Visits of Joseph's Brethren to Egypt—The Migration of the Patriarch and his Family—Goshen—Shepherd Kings—Death of Jacob and Joseph—Cruelty and Oppression of the Egyptians—Reasons for this Treatment—Superstition of the People—Fecundity of the Jews—Exterminating Edict—Josephus—Birth of Moses—Labours of the Hebrews—The Pyramids—The Exodus—Destruction of Pharaoh—State Persecution*—SECT. II. *Naboth the Jezreelite—Jezreel—Patrimonial Inheritance—Its Nature—Regulations thereto—Peculiarity of the Hebrew Constitution—Its Excellency—Naboth's Refusal—Ahab's Mortification—Jezebel—Her Control over Ahab—Her murderous Scheme—Slaughter of Naboth—Elijah—Divine Retribution—Awful End of Ahab and Jezebel.*

SECTION I.—THE AFFLICTION OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN EGYPT.

How long a period elapsed between the migration into Egypt under Jacob, and the *exodus*, or departure under Moses, has been a question debated from the earliest ages, by Jewish as well as Christian writers. "While some assign the whole duration of *four hundred and thirty years* to the captivity in Egypt, others include the residence of the patriarchs, *two hundred and fifteen* years, within this period. The vestiges of this controversy appear in all the earlier writings. The Hebrew and Samaritan texts; the several copies of the Greek version of the Scriptures, differ: St. Stephen, in the Acts, seems to have followed one opinion; St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, the other; Josephus contradicts himself repeatedly; the great body of English divines follow the latter hypothesis; the modern scholars of Germany generally prefer the former. The following

* Hebrew Tales; selected and translated from the Writings of the Ancient Hebrew Sages: to which is prefixed, An Essay on the uninspired Literature of the Hebrews. By Hyman Hurwitz, Author of *Vindiciæ Hebraicæ*, &c. 12mo. London, 1826.

brief statement, however, may throw light on this intricate subject. The Jews were firmly and religiously persuaded, that their genealogies were not merely accurate, but complete. As then only two names appeared between Levi and Moses, those of Kohath and Amram, and the date of life assigned to these two seemed irreconcileable with the longer period of *four hundred and thirty years*, they adopted very generally the notion, that only *two hundred and fifteen years* were passed in Egypt. They overlooked, or left to miraculous intervention to account for a still greater difficulty, the prodigious increase in one family during one generation. In the desert, the males of the descendants of Kohath are reckoned at *eight thousand six hundred and nine*. Kohath had four sons; from each son then, in one generation, must have sprung, on the average, *two thousand one hundred and fifty* males. On this hypothesis the alternative remains, either that some names have been lost from the genealogies between Kohath and Amram, or between Amram and Moses; a notion rather confirmed by the fact, that, in the genealogy of Joshua, in the book of Chronicles, he stands twelfth in descent from Joseph, while Moses is the fourth from Levi. There are strong grounds for believing some general error runs through the whole numbering of the Israelites in the desert."*

The circumstances connected with the removal of Jacob and his family into Egypt, form an interesting page of his eventful history, which none can peruse without acknowledging "the finger of God." An insignificant sparrow falls not to the ground without his notice. The laws of nature are the rules by which his power is guided, and these laws are of his own appointment, and subject to his control. It is from him, therefore, that the seasons have their succession, and their vicissitudes. Joseph was a youth of indisputable piety, and enjoyed the paternal regard and affection of Jacob. This partiality gave rise to an inveterate jealousy, on the part of his elder brethren; and an opportunity ere long presented itself, in which that spirit was called into disgraceful and diabolical exercise. The flocks of the patriarch had been sent to Shechem, for the sake of pasturage, under the guardianship of his elder sons. Joseph was sent to inquire after them; when, perceiving his approach, they determined on his destruction. Reuben hesitated to imbrue his hands in his blood, and proposed that he should be cast into a pit, which they found, intending afterwards to draw him out, and restore him to his aged parent. At the suggestion of Judah, however, they all agreed to sell him into slavery, by disposing of him to a company of Ishmaelitish merchants, who were on their route toward Egypt. Into this country, therefore, Joseph was conveyed; where, by a strange association of circumstances, he was elevated to a conspicuous station in the government.

The immediate cause of the rise of Jacob's exiled son, was a certain dream which had greatly disturbed the rest of the Egyptian King, and which his wise men had failed to interpret. At the suggestion of the chief butler, Joseph was summoned, who, after asserting with

* The History of the Jews. 12mo. Vol. i., pp. 57, 58. Second Edition. London, 1830.

great faithfulness, that the power of interpreting dreams belonged only to the Most High, proceeded to declare, that the dreams of Pharaoh were mercifully sent of God, to admonish him with regard to what was about to take place in his kingdom; and then proceeded to state, that his visions portended seven years of great plenty, which would be followed by seven years of great scarceness; and that the abundance of former years would be consumed by the sterility of the latter. His address to the Monarch concluded with the advice, that some prudent individual should be placed over the land, with authority to collect the surplus produce of the years of plenty; and thus "lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come." To this responsible office, Joseph was appointed, whose reputation eminently depended on the future. His character was fully established, and the divinity of his predictions made manifest.

The famine was as extensive as it was severe. The neighbouring countries were visited as well as Egypt. The land of Canaan bitterly felt the scourge; and the family of Jacob, which now amounted to a considerable number, shared in the common calamity, as the children of the patriarch were all married and had families, and resided together, if not under the same roof, yet in the same neighbourhood, as one little patriarchal community. Among the first who came to purchase corn, appeared the ten sons of Jacob. It is, as is well observed by a modern historian, no easy task to treat, after Josephus, the transactions which took place between Joseph and his family. The relation in the book of Genesis is, perhaps, the most exquisite model of the manner in which history, without elevating its tone, or departing from its plain and unadorned veracity, assumes the language and spirit of the most touching poetry. The cold and rhetorical paraphrase of Josephus, sometimes a writer of great vigour and simplicity, enforces the prudence of adhering as closely as possible to the language of the original record. The brothers are at first received with sternness and asperity; charged with being spies, come to observe the undefended state of the country. This accusation, though not seriously intended, in some degree confirms the notion, that the Egyptians had recently suffered; and, therefore, constantly apprehended foreign invasion. They are thrown into prison for three days, and released on condition of proving the truth of their story, by bringing their younger brother Benjamin with them. Their own danger brings up before their minds the recollection of their crime. They express to one another their deep remorse for the supposed murder of their brother, little thinking that Joseph, who had conversed with them through an interpreter, understood every word they said.* "And Joseph turned himself about from them and wept." (Gen. xlii. 24.) Simeon was left as a hostage, and the brothers were dismissed; but on their journey towards Canaan, they were surprised and alarmed to find their money returned. The aged and suspicious Patriarch, at first, refused to intrust his youngest and best-beloved child to their care; but the present supply of corn being consumed, they have no alternative between starvation and their return to Egypt. Jacob

* History of the Jews. Vol. i., pp. 49, 50.

reluctantly, and with many fond admonitions, commits the surviving child of Rachel to their protection. On their arrival in Egypt, they are more favourably received; and Joseph anxiously inquires about the health of their father. The sight of his uterine brother, Benjamin, overpowers him with emotion. The brethren are feasted; Benjamin is peculiarly distinguished by a larger portion of meat. The brothers are once more dismissed, but are now pursued and apprehended on a charge of secreting a silver cup, which had been concealed in the sack of Benjamin; and ultimately, Joseph, the Vizier, the great Minister of the King of Egypt, makes himself known as the brother whom they had sold into slavery. "Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. So it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt." (Gen. xlv. 1—8.) Joseph forthwith sends his brethren back to Canaan, with a store of provision, and with waggons to transport the Patriarch and all his kindred into Egypt, during the continuance of the famine. These tidings were more than the feeble frame of Jacob could sustain: he fainted, and his life was in jeopardy. At length he revived, and, convinced of the truth of the statement made by his children, he exclaimed, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die." (Gen. xlv. 28.)

The descendants of Abraham migrate into Egypt. Joseph secures for them a favourable reception; and the fruitful district of Goshen, the most fertile pasture-land in the country, becomes their residence; where, according to Maillet, the grass grows to the height of a man, and so thick, that an ox may browse a whole day, lying on the ground.* The establishment of Jacob in Goshen coincides with, and confirms, an important point of Egyptian history. While Egypt

* "This was the most fertile pasture-ground in the whole of Lower Egypt: thence called *Goshen*, from *Gush*, in Arabic, signifying 'a heart,' or whatsoever is choice, or precious. There was also a *Goshen* in the territory of the tribe of Judah, so called for the same reason. (Joshua x. 41.) Hence Joseph recommended it to his family, as 'the best of the land;' (Gen. xlvii. 11;) and 'the fat of the land.' (Gen. xlv. 18.) The land of Goshen lay along the most easterly branch of the Nile, and on the east side of it. For it is evident that, at the time of the exode, the Israelites did not cross the Nile. In ancient times, the fertile land was more considerably extensive, both in length and breadth, than at present, in consequence of the general failure of the eastern branches of the river; the main body of the stream verging more and more to the west continually, and deepening the channels on that side."—Hale's Chronology, vol. i., p. 374. 8vo. London, 1830.

was rapidly advancing in her national prosperity, a fierce and barbarous Asiatic horde burst suddenly upon her fruitful provinces, destroyed her temples, murdered her Priests; and, having subdued the whole of lower Egypt, established a dynasty of six successive Kings. These *hyksos*, or royal shepherds, were afterwards expelled. The hostility exhibited by the Egyptians to the memory of these marauders, was of the most deadly description, in which the shepherds of Canaan were called to bear a part.* The generosity of Joseph is, therefore, of a highly exemplary character, inasmuch as he did not disclaim all association and connexion with them, but made ample provision for their present and future necessities. The last strong hold of the shepherd Kings was the city of Abaris, which must have been situated either within or closely bordering upon the district of Goshen. The expulsion of the shepherds would leave the tract unoccupied, and open for the settlement of another pastoral people. Goshen itself was likewise called Rameses, a word ingeniously explained by Jablonski, as meaning the land of shepherds, and containing all the low, and sometimes marshy meadows, which lie on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, and extend very considerably to the south.†

In the luxuriant department of Goshen the sons of Israel multiplied with a fecundity which astonished their neighbours; the fertile soil of Egypt, it would appear, not only increasing the fruitfulness of animal and vegetable life, but also that of the human race. Some of the ancient writers have stated, that it was no uncommon event for the women of Egypt to produce sometimes three, four, or even seven, children at a birth. Marriage contracted in early life, the unrestrained and unlimited practice of polygamy, the protracted duration of human existence, together with the plenty and comparative cheapness of the necessaries of life, would naturally tend to increase the population, even were the finger of divine Providence hidden or concealed. At the expiration of about seventeen years, the venerable Jacob is gathered unto his fathers. Before his departure he pronounced his final benediction on Joseph, and with great solemnity adjured him to convey his remains to the burial-place of the family in Canaan. This was done with even more than Egyptian magnificence, to the great and lasting astonishment of the people of Canaan. In a short period Joseph also died, leaving directions

* "Every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians." Mons. Champollion imagines, and with apparent reason, that he can recognise on the ancient monuments of Egypt, these shepherd Kings with their savage hordes: a people having red hair and blue eyes, and covered only with an undressed hide, loosely wrapped over them; they are painted; and also represented as struggling in mortal warfare with the natives, and occasionally in attitudes of the lowest degradation which the scorn and hatred of their conquerors could invent. They lie prostrate under the footstools of the Kings, in the position described in the book of Joshua, where the rulers actually set their feet on the necks of the captive Monarchs. (Joshua x. 24.) The common people appear to have taken pride in having the figures of these detested enemies wrought on the soles of their sandals, that they might be thus perpetually trampled upon: even the dead carried this memorial of their hatred into the grave; the same figures being painted on the lower wrappers of the mummies, accompanied with similar marks of abhorrence and contempt."—*History of the Jews.*

† History of the Jews. Vol. i., p. 52

that his body should be embalmed and enclosed in a suitable coffin, that when his kindred should return to the land of their fathers, his remains might also be deposited in the common tomb.

In process of time, the services of Joseph were forgotten, and a new King arose who knew him not. (Exod. i. 8.) Two reasons may be assigned for the cruelty and oppression which were exercised upon the descendants of Jacob. They had multiplied with such great rapidity as to have become a considerable people. The Monarch who had succeeded to the throne was opposite, both in character and disposition, to the patron and protector of Joseph. He was naturally subtle, cruel, and suspicious, and regarded with a jealous eye the increasing numbers of the Hebrews; and, heedless of the benefits which the land of Egypt had derived from their celebrated kinsman, he contemplated with dread and dismay the unfriendly influence which they might exert in case of war or civil tumult, especially as they occupied the most open and accessible frontier of the country; and were able, on that account, to give free passage to, or join in, a dangerous confederacy with any foreign invader. The cruelty and oppression which the Egyptians had in former times received from the shepherd Kings, would tend to render them even more inveterate toward the shepherds of Canaan; especially as it is not improbable that the terms of the Abrahamic covenant had come to the ears of the authorities of Egypt, and that part which predicted the vast increase of the race, together with their power and authority, would be received with dread and apprehension. "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." (Gen. xxii. 17.)

Another cause of the persecution of the Hebrews, was the religion which they held. That professed by the inhabitants of Egypt was of the most degrading and immoral character. In the days of Moses, Egypt was renowned for learning; he was instructed "in all its wisdom;" and it is one of the commendations of Solomon, at a later period, that he excelled in knowledge "all the wisdom of the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt." Astronomy, which probably, like that of the Chaldeans, comprehended also judicial astrology, physics, agriculture, jurisprudence, medicine, architecture, painting, and sculpture, were the principal sciences and arts; to which were added, and that by their wisest men, the study of divination, magic, and enchantments. They had, also, their consulters with familiar spirits, and necromancers, those who had, or pretended to have, intercourse with the infernal deities, and the spirits of the dead, and delivered responses to inquirers. Of all this knowledge, good and evil, and of a monstrous system of idolatry, Egypt was the polluted fountain to the surrounding nations; but in that country itself it appears to have degenerated into the most absurd and debased forms. Among nations who are not blessed by divine revelation, the luminaries of heaven are the first objects of worship. Diodorus Siculus, mentioning the Egyptians, informs us, that "the first men, looking up to the world above them, and struck with

admiration at the nature of the universe, supposed the sun and moon to be the principal and eternal gods." This, which may be called the natural superstition of mankind, we may trace in the annals of the West, as well as of the East; among the inhabitants of the new world, as well as of the old. The sun and moon, under the names of Isis and Osiris, were the chief objects of adoration among the Egyptians. In earlier times they had a purer faith.

A superstitious reverence for certain animals, as propitious or hurtful to the human race, was not peculiar to the Egyptians. The cow has been venerated in India from the most remote antiquity. The serpent has been the object of religious respect to one half of the nations of the known world. The Romans had sacred animals which they kept in their temples, and distinguished with peculiar honours. We need not therefore be surprised that a nation so superstitious as the Egyptians should honour, with peculiar marks of veneration, the ichneumon, the ibis, the dog, the falcon, the wolf, and the crocodile. These they entertained at great expense, and with much splendour. Lands were set apart for their maintenance, persons of the highest rank were employed in feeding and attending them, rich carpets were spread in their apartments, and the pomp at their funerals corresponded with the profusion and luxury which waited on them while alive. What chiefly tended to favour the progress of animal-worship in Egypt was the language of hieroglyphics. In the inscriptions on their temples and public edifices, animals, and even vegetables, were the symbols of the gods whom they worshipped. Such being the polluted form of worship adopted by the people of Egypt, it cannot excite surprise in any that the more simple and unostentatious form of religion inculcated by the Patriarchs excited disgust and condemnation. Let it also be remembered, that the object contemplated by the divine Being in the selection of the family of Abraham, and conferring upon it important privileges, would not fail to raise the enmity of the carnal mind, and to direct against it the energy and skill of the powers of darkness to frustrate the design, and, if possible, erase the name of that family from the remembrance of man. For the preservation and increase of pure religion, the Almighty, called him to be the head of a nation who should preserve his worship, and exhibit to the world a wise and a happy people; that a covert might be provided for the Heathen around, who might forsake idolatry and become worshippers of the one true God; that an illustrious line of Prophets might be raised who should direct the eye of Israel's faith to Him who was to be "exalted a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." (Acts v. 31.) All would have been frustrated, had the murderous machinations of the Egyptian King succeeded; but, in opposition to such a failure, the Most High multiplied the holy seed in Egypt with distinguished care, rescued them from the iron hand of oppression; and caused his gracious purposes, with regard to the redemption of the world, to be fully and gloriously accomplished.

With a policy at once inhuman and cruel, the King, who knew not

Joseph, commenced a system of unheard-of oppression, which was intended, not only to check the increase of the Hebrews, but to subdue and smother any spirit of insubordination which might manifest itself in open revolt; a state of things, considering the immense number of disaffected and oppressed Israelites, that would have been appalling and dangerous to the existence of the Government. They were seized, and compelled to labour at the public works, in the erection of new cities, as Pithom and Rameses, which were intended to be storehouses for the vast treasures of the land. Other historians assert, that they were employed on the pyramids,* on the great canals of the country, and in the construction of dams, for the purpose of irrigating the plains of Egypt. Notwithstanding this hard treatment, the Israelites continued to multiply. In the quarries, the lime-kilns, and brick-fields of Egypt, toiling beneath an almost vertical sun, they increased with a rapidity as great as in the cool tents and among the balmy breezes of Goshen. A constant succession of barbarous usage would tend to produce hostility; and tyranny, having wantonly enlarged the number of enemies, must resort to further and more cruel measures to subdue them. A murderous decree is promulgated: the midwives, who in this land of hereditary professions, were probably a distinct class, and under the *surveillance* of responsible officers, were commanded to destroy all the Hebrew children at their birth. "But the midwives feared God, and did not as the King of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive." (Exod. i. 17.) The King, being frustrated in his plans through the disobedience of the midwives, resolves to take into his own hands the execution of his exterminating scheme, which, if carried into effect, would have cut short, at one stroke, the race of Abraham. "And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive;" (Exod. i. 22;) probably to fill in time the harems of their oppressors.

The testimony of Josephus is important: he says, "The Egyptians grew delicate and lazy, as to pains-taking, and gave themselves up to other pleasures, and in particular to the love of gain. They also became very ill-affected towards the Hebrews, as touched with envy at their prosperity; for when they saw how the nation of the Israelites flourished, and were become eminent already in plenty of wealth, which they had acquired by their virtue and natural love of labour, they thought their increase was to their own detriment; and having in length of time forgotten the benefits they had received from Joseph, (particularly the crown being now come into another family,) they became very abusive to the Israelites, and contrived many ways

* Josephus states that they built the pyramids. It is certain, from the Scriptures, that several cities were erected by them, among which were Pithom and Rameses. A tomb has been discovered at Thebes belonging to a superintendent of public works, of the reign of Thosmos III., on which is sculptured a representation of Hebrews making bricks. It is published by the antiquary, Sig. Rosellini. *(Mon. Civ.*, pl. xlix.) The whole is too graphical and expressive to be mistaken, and seems greatly to confirm the statement of Josephus, that the exodus took place under that Monarch. Serious difficulties, however, stand in the way of such a conclusion, as may be seen in Mr. Cullimore's admirable paper on "the *exodi* of the Jews and Greeks." (Fraser's Magazine, Oct., 1836, vol. xiv., p. 461, *et seq.*)

of afflicting them; for they enjoined them to cut a great number of channels for the river, and hinder its waters from stagnating upon its running over its own banks; they set them also to build pyramids, and by all this wore them out; and forced them to learn all sorts of mechanical arts, and to accustom themselves to hard labour. And four hundred years did they spend under these afflictions; for they strove one against the other which should get the mastery, the Egyptians desiring to destroy the Israelites by these labours, and the Israelites desiring to hold out to the end under them.

"While the affairs of the Hebrews were in this condition, there was this occasion offered itself to the Egyptians, which made them more solicitous for the extinction of our nation. One of those sacred scribes who are very sagacious in foretelling future events truly, told the King that about this time there would a child be born to the Israelites, who, if he were reared, would bring the Egyptian dominion low,* and would raise the Israelites; that he would excel all men in virtue, and obtain a glory that would be remembered through all ages. Which thing was so feared by the King, that, according to this man's opinion, he commanded that they should cast every male child, which was born to the Israelites, into the river, and destroy it;

* The child received an excellent education, and became trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. This last fact rests on Jewish traditions reported by Stephen; but it is highly curious to contrast the other romantic fictions of the later writers, probably the Alexandrian Jews, with this plain narrative. These fables have no appearance of ancient traditions, but all the exaggeration of Rabbinical invention. The birth of Moses was prophetically foreshown. The sacred scribe announced to the King that a child was about to be born among the Israelites, who was to bring ruin on the power of Egypt, and unexampled glory on the Hebrew nation: he was to surpass all the human race in the greatness and duration of his fame. To cut short this fatal life, not with the design of weakening the Jewish people, this elder Herod issues out his edict for the first massacre of the innocents. Amram, the father of Moses, is likewise favoured with a vision, foretelling the glory of his son. Thermutis, the daughter of Pharaoh, (the manners having become too refined to suppose that a King's daughter would bathe herself in the river,) is more elegantly described as amusing herself on the banks. Seeing the basket floating on the water, she orders certain divers, ready, of course, at her command, to bring it to her. Enchanted by the exquisite beauty of the child, she sends for a nurse; but the infant patriot indignantly refuses the milk of an Egyptian; nurse after nurse is tried and rejected; nothing will satisfy him but the breast of his own mother. When he was three years old, he was such a prodigy of beauty, that all who passed by would suspend their work to gaze upon him. The Princess adopts him, shows him to her father, and insists on his being recognised heir to the kingdom. The King places the diadem on his head, which the child contemptuously seizes and tramples under his feet. The royal scribe in vain attempts to awaken the apprehensions of the Monarch. The youth grows up in such universal esteem and favour, that when the Ethiopians invade the country, he is placed at the head of the army. The district through which he chooses to march, rather than ascend the Nile, being full of noxious reptiles, he presses a squadron of tame ibises, lets them fly at the serpents, and thus speedily clears his way. By this extraordinary stratagem he comes unexpectedly upon the enemy, defeats and pursues them to their capital city, Meroe. Here the daughter of the King falls in love with him, and the city is surrendered on condition of his marrying the Ethiopian Princess; a fiction obviously formed on the Cushite or Arabian (translated in the LXX., "Ethiopian") wife of Moses. Jealousy and hatred, the usual attendants on greatness, endanger his life; the Priests urge, and the timid King assents to, the death of the stranger, who with difficulty makes his escape into the desert. But as is usual with those who embellish genuine history, the simple dignity of the Jewish patriot is lowered, rather than exalted.—*History of the Jews*, vol. i., pp. 61—63. Edit. 12mo. London, 1838.

that, besides this, the Egyptian midwives * should watch the labours of the Hebrew women, and observe what is born, for those were the women who were enjoined to do the office of midwives to them; and by reason of their relation to the King would not transgress his commands. He enjoined, also, that if any parents should disobey him, and venture to spare their male children alive, they and their families should be destroyed. This was a severe affliction indeed to those who suffered it, not only as they were deprived of their sons, and, while they were the parents themselves, they were obliged to be subservient to the destruction of their own children; but as it was to be supposed to tend to the extirpation of their nation, while upon the destruction of their children, and their own gradual dissolution, the calamity would become very hard and inconsolable to them; and this was the ill state they were in. But no one can be too hard for the purpose of God, though he contrive ten thousand subtle devices for that end; for this child, whom the sacred Scribe foretold, was brought up and concealed from the observers appointed by the King; and he that foretold him did not mistake in the consequences of his preservation."†

Some historians have stated, without hesitation, that the Israelites were not employed in the erection of the pyramids, and that they are of a much later date. As there are several of them, both great and small, and some were built during the sojourn of the people of God in Egypt, it is the firm conviction of several learned and deservedly reputable and popular writers, that they were the workmanship of the oppressed descendants of Jacob. It is also ours.

A description of the pyramids of Egypt has hitherto been regarded, says the Editor of the Fragments in Calmet, as matter of curiosity, rather than as being applicable in illustrating Scripture; but after considering the subject thoroughly, we conceive that Providence has left us these as everlasting monuments of the veracity of that sacred history with which we are favoured; in fact, that they are part, at least, of the labours of the Israelites previous to the exodus; and that they remain to witness the leading events of that portion of the history of the sons of Jacob. The following considerations have led to this opinion :—

1. If we inquire what were the labours of the Israelites for the Pharaohs, we find they consisted in making bricks to be hardened in the sun; for such bricks alone require the assistance of straw in their composition, which material is particularly mentioned by the officers of this people. "They made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field." (Exod. i. 14.) Accordingly, it appears from various travellers, that the internal construction of these mighty masses consists, among other materials, of brick of this description, and thereby agrees with that fact of the sacred story. This is true of the great pyramid which

* Josephus is clear that these were Egyptians, and not Israelites; which is very probable, it being not easily supposed that Pharaoh could trust the Israelite midwives to execute so barbarous a command against their own nation.

† Josephus, Antiq., book ii., chap. ix., sect. 1, 2. 8vo. edit. Vol. i. London, 1825.

is usually visited; but the pyramids of Sakkara, at some distance, are wholly composed of sun-burnt bricks, so that these are undeniable.

2. The multitude when in the wilderness are represented as saying, "We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely;" (that is, gratuitously, not at their own expense;) "the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic." (Num. xi. 5.) We are informed by Herodotus, that on the pyramid was an inscription "expressing the expense of the articles of food consumed by the labourers; the radishes," (which were probably the leeks of Scripture,) "onions, and garlic, and that they cost *sixteen hundred* talents of silver." No doubt these vegetables were cheap enough, so that this considerable sum implies a prodigious number of workmen employed during a great length of time. Pliny gives a similar testimony.*

3. With regard to the number of persons employed in the erection of these structures, Diodorus Siculus says, that *three hundred and sixty thousand* workmen or slaves were occupied twenty years in constructing the pyramid of Chemnis.† Herodotus says, *one hundred thousand* were employed in bringing stones, *ten thousand* at a time, and relieved each other every three months. We suppose, therefore, that the number given by Diodorus includes the whole of the population engaged in the work; while the number given by Herodotus is that employed in a specific department; but that all were relieved every three months; and that only a proportion of one tenth was employed at a time, seems to have been a kind of rule in the business. Now, it is very probable that the Israelites were in this manner relieved; for we find that the mother of Moses (Exod. ii. 2, 3) could not longer hide him than three months. Aaron, also, was able to take a journey (which, according to Dr. Shaw, usually occupies two months) to Mount Horeb to meet Moses, which, had he been kept without intermission to his labour, would have been impossible. Indeed, if the Israelites laboured for Pharaoh in the field, they could not have been constantly employed in building; labours in the field, also, have their interval by the appointment of nature, not to allude to the fact, that the possession of great herds of cattle by the Israelites when they went out of Egypt, shows that they must have had time to attend to them. In addition to all this, it must be observed that their profession was that of shepherds, that they

* Hist. Nat., li'). xxxvi., cap. 12.

† Pliny states that three hundred and sixty-six thousand men were employed twenty years in building the great pyramid; and that, during the building of this and two others, there were not less than one thousand eight hundred talents expended in radishes, garlic, and onions for the workmen. These three hundred and sixty-six thousand men were in all likelihood Israelites, and were as many as could be spared from other slavish employments; and it is likely that the *radishes*, *garlic*, and *onions* mentioned by Pliny, were the whole of the food, with the addition of melons and some fish, which these persecuted people had from their cruel oppressors. Hence we may learn how much they had degenerated afterwards, when they preferred the *onions* and *garlic* which they had in Egypt, to the *manna* which God sent. In other words, they became so corrupt that they were capable of preferring their Egyptian bondage to the service of the Lord of hosts.—*Christian Martyrology*, edited by Dr. A. Clarke.

were placed in the richest pasturage of the country, that Moses stipulated that not a hoof should be left behind, and that the very institution of the passover implied the possession of flocks; these, with other circumstances, abundantly prove that the Israelites must have had intervals of time in which to pay attention to their own property and business.

4. It appears also, that the native Egyptians, the governing people, did not labour on these edifices. This, we are told, was the custom of the Egyptian King, Sesostris, and seems to have been the rule adopted, as a dictate of policy, in early as well as in later ages. Respecting Sesostris, Diodorus Siculus says: He built—and employed in those works, none of his own subjects, but only the labours of captives. He was even careful to engrave these words on the temples, "No Egyptian had a hand in these structures." It is, therefore, likely that the stranger Israelites found in Egypt by the "King who knew not Joseph," and whose increasing numbers and strength that King dreaded, would be set to labour, though in mere waste of their strength, on structures only useful in a political view, rather than any of the natural inhabitants; towards whom the same policy was not necessary. This conduct was afterwards adopted by Solomon, when he desired to build "cities of store, in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion:"—"All the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel; their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy; upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bond-service unto this day. But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen." (1 Kings ix. 19—22.) That it was anciently, as it still is in the East, the custom to employ bondmen in building, is notorious: we have, therefore, only to inquire, how far this custom was pursued with regard to the Israelites. They are said to have been "brought out of the house of bondage;" (Exod. xx. 2;) they are charged, "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee." (Deut. xv. 15.) "Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt." (Deut. vi. 21.) That the Israelites did not make brick only, but performed other labours of building, may be inferred from Exodus ix. 8, 10: "Moses took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh," no doubt from one of the furnaces which was tended by his people; and also, "I removed his shoulder from the burden, his hands were delivered from the *mortar basket*," not "pots," as in our translation. It is recorded, that the Israelites built cities for Pharaoh, and in such erections they might and must have carried the burden and the mortar-hod; yet, as their delivery from these things is spoken of, as the furnace was in all probability not very distant from the palace of the Egyptian Monarch; and as there is no reason to suppose that soon after they had built the cities, they were dismissed, these circumstances evidently corroborate the positive testimony of Josephus, that Israel was employed on the pyramids. As the last of these edifices was never completely

finished, we may, perhaps, attribute the omission to the confusion consequent on the overthrow of the tyrant in the Red Sea,* which event terminated the ungodly life and the sanguinary deeds of Pharaoh. Neither the cunning and malice of the King, the cruelty and oppression of the task-masters, nor the wretched quantity and quality of their food, could succeed against them. The Most High, in whom they trusted, arose in their behalf. After scourging the people with ten grievous plagues, the Israelites were brought from "out of the house of bondage with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments;" (Exod. vi. 6;) while the impious Sovereign, meditating and attempting a blow which was intended to sweep the servants of Jehovah from the face of the earth, was destroyed without remedy.

Such was the issue of the first state persecution recorded on the page of history; and such, observes Dr. A. Clarke, must be their lot; for he who opposes the truth, opposes the God of truth; and he who contends against Omnipotence, must certainly be cut off. As this was the first church of God established in the earth, what happened to it may be considered as typical of what should happen to the true church to the conclusion of the world; and teach us what true religion had to expect from heathen Emperors, and Kings, impious Magistrates, corrupt Judges, and Christless Popes; and the event has fully declared, that succeeding persecutors have not only acted on the same principles, but have improved on the murderous schemes of their cruel predecessors; for as the religion of Christ gave no quarter to vice, the vicious have never given any quarter to religion.

This persecution, like every succeeding one, was both *wicked* and *impolitic*. The Egyptians owed the salvation of their country to the Israelites; and Pharaoh owed his crown and all its splendour to the wise and politic management of Joseph. To forget such benefits was abominable; and to persecute the authors of them to death, was the excess of cruelty. But it was not less *impolitic* than *wicked*. The Israelites, by their numbers, were a great accession to the strength of the country; and there was nothing to be dreaded from their multitudes, as the religion they professed would never permit them either to rebel against or to injure the state; when they were numbered after their expulsion from Egypt, they amounted to *six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty persons*, from *twenty* years old and upwards, (Num. i. 46,) not reckoning the tribe of Levi, nor the many thousands of young people. What a stroke was this to the population, the strength and wealth of the kingdom! A blow from which, in the nature of things, the nation could not recover for centuries! One would have imagined, that the bad success of this *state persecution* would have prevented its repetition in any nation, where the history that recorded it was publicly and commonly read. But the following work shows that it was repeated, and repeated again and again, even in civilized and in Christian countries, and with the same result as in the beginning. The persecutors lost their strength and their wealth, and the course of the persecuted was accredited by the patient, unprovoked sufferings of its votaries; and

* Calmet, Dict. Frag. DXLI.

gained ground both in numbers and respectability. But such is the enmity of the carnal mind against God and his truth, that men will oppose and persecute, not only at the risk of their souls, but also to the manifest injury of their secular interests. This has been exemplified in every *state persecution*, when those who took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, rather than defile their consciences, were obliged to seek refuge in other nations, whither they carried their arts and sciences; and thereby added both to the population and prosperity of those countries which opened the arms of benevolence to receive them.*

SECTION II.—THE MARTYRDOM OF NABOTH, THE JEZREELITE.

JEZREEL, the place where this sanguinary and diabolical transaction occurred, was a town in the tribe of Issachar, (Joshua xix. 18,) in which the King of Israel had a palace, and where the court often resided, although Samaria was the metropolis of the kingdom. It is most frequently mentioned in the history of the house of Ahab, it being the scene of some of his most cruel and oppressive acts, and the place where Jehu executed his dreadful commission against his family, when Jezebel, his infamous wife, and Joram, together with all pertaining to that wretched dynasty, perished. (2 Kings ix. 14—37; x. 1—11.) These horrid events appear to have given the Kings of Israel a distaste to this residence, as it is not again mentioned in their history.†

Naboth was an inhabitant of Jezreel, and the possessor of a patrimonial vineyard adjoining the garden of the palace, which the Kings of Israel had there. To these inheritances great importance was attached. When the children of Israel were numbered, immediately before their entrance into the promised land, and found (exclusive of the Levites) to exceed six hundred thousand men, the Lord said unto Moses, "Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance, according to the number of names. To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance: to every one shall his inheritance be given according to those that were numbered of him. Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers shall they inherit." (Num. xxvi. 53—55.) By this regulation, provision was made for the support of six hundred thousand yeomanry, with from six to

* Christian Martyrology. By Dr. A. Clarke.

† It is, however, named by Hosea; (chap. i. 4; comp. i. 11, ii. 12;) and in Judith, (i. 8; iv. 6; vii. 3,) it occurs under the name of Esdraelon. In the days of Eusebius and Jerome it was still a large village, called Esdraela; (*Onomast.* sub voce Jezreel;) and in the same age it again occurs as Stradela. (*Itin. Hieros.*, p. 586.) Nothing more is heard of it till the time of the Crusades, when it is called by the Franks, Paroum Gerinum, and by the Arabs, Zerin; it is described as commanding a wide prospect on the east, to the mountain of Gilead; and on the west, to Mount Carmel. (Will. Tyr., xxii. 26.) But this line of identification seems to have been afterwards lost sight of, and Jezreel came to be identified with Jenin. Indeed, the village of Zerin ceased to be mentioned by travellers, till Turner, Buckingham, and others after them, again brought it into notice; and it is still more lately, that the identification of Zerin and Jezreel has been restored. (Raumer Patast, p. 155; Schubert, iii. 164; Elliott, ii. 379; Robinson, iii. 164; Kitto, Cyclop. Bib. Lit., in loco.)

twenty-five acres of land each.* This land they held independent of all temporal superiors, by direct tenure from the Lord Jehovah, their Sovereign, by whose power they were to acquire their territory; and under whose protection only they could retain it. On this principle, the lands so distributed were unalienable. "The land shall not be sold for ever," says the law, "for the land is mine, saith the Lord; ye are strangers and sojourners with me." (Lev. xxv. 23.) Every tribe and every family being thus settled in their inheritances, became local without remove; each was to continue, and their posterity after them, on the same estate which originally fell to them.

Thus the basis of the Hebrew constitution, continues Dr. Graves, was an equal agrarian law. But this law was guarded by other provisions most wise and salutary. The accumulation of debt was prevented, first, by prohibiting every Jew from accepting of interest from any of his fellow-citizens; (Lev. xxv. 36, 37;) next, by establishing a regular release of all debts and servitude, every seventh year; that the Hebrew nation might not decline from so great a number of free subjects, and be lost to the public in the condition of slaves; and, finally, by ordaining that no lands could be alienated for ever, but must, on each year of jubilee, or seventh sabbatic year, revert to the families which originally possessed them, discharged of all incumbrances. For this, express provision was made: "Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a jubilee unto you, and ye shall return every man unto his family." (Lev. xxv. 10.) Thus, without absolutely depriving individuals of all temporary dominion over their landed property, it re-established, every fiftieth year, that original and equal distribution of it, which was the foundation of the national polity; and as the period of such reversion was fixed and regular, all parties had due notice of the terms on which they negotiated; there was no ground for public commotion, or private complaint.

A farther regulation respecting the release in the year of jubilee, will illustrate the character of Naboth, and consequently is deserving of notice. It did not extend to houses in cities: these, if not redeemed within one year after they were sold, were alienated for ever. (Lev. xxv. 29, 30.) This circumstance must have given property in the country a decided preference over property in cities; and induced every Jew to reside on and improve his land,† and employ his time in the care of his flocks and agriculture; which, as they had been the occupation of those revered Patriarchs from whom

* Vide Lowman on the Hebrew Government, chap. iv. Second Edition. 8vo. London, 1745. Vide also Cunæus de Republica Hebræorum, cap. ii.; De Lege Agraria, et inæstimabile ejus Utilitate; and Ledeyker de Republica Hebræorum, lib. v., cap. xi., xii., xiii.; The Universal History, vol. i., p. 617; Graves's Lectures on the Pentateuch, part ii., sect. iv.

† "These lands were given unto the fathers, and must pass to the children, and remain for ever in the same tribes and families. This law was the effect of deep and wise policy. It perpetuated all the advantages of the first distribution, and by confining the citizen to his original spot, it kept up in him the love of industry and frugality. It repressed avarice, it prevented the ambitious schemes of great land-holders, and the oppression of the poor, jealousies, discontent, factions, and all those evils which other commonwealths vainly endeavoured to remedy, by their agrarian laws."—*Letters of certain Jews to Mons. de Voltaire*, vol. ii., part iii., letter 2, sect. v., pp. 18, 19.

the Jews descended, were with them the most honourable of all employments. Further, the original division of land was to the several tribes according to their families, so that each tribe was settled in the same county, and each family in the same barony or hundred. Nor was the estate of any family in one tribe permitted to pass into another, even by the marriage of an heiress. So that, not only was the original balance of property preserved, but the closest and dearest connexions of affinity attached to each other the inhabitants of every vicinage. Thus, domestic virtue and affection had a more extensive sphere of action; the happiness of rural life was increased; a general attention to virtue and decorum was promoted, from that natural emulation which each family would feel to preserve unsullied the reputation of their neighbourhood; and the poor might everywhere expect more ready assistance, since they implored it from men whose sympathy in their sufferings would be quickened by hereditary friendship, and hereditary connexion.*

It was on these considerations, that Naboth clung with such indomitable and religious tenacity to the inheritance of his fathers, when Ahab required him to sell his land to him, or to exchange it for another portion. In the estimation of the Jezreelite, it would be a sin against God for him to alienate from his family the property which, on the division of Canaan, fell to their lot; and also an infamy, the stain of which, in the sight of a Jew, was indelible. Naboth, therefore, who appears to have feared God, chose rather to expose himself to the resentment of the King, than commit an act which was not only in itself dishonourable, but opposed to the divine command, and contrary to the custom of the country. He, therefore, with promptitude, and with due respect to the person and authority of the Monarch, replied, "The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee." (1 Kings xxi. 3.)

Despotic and abandoned as Ahab confessedly was, it appears he could not, in accordance with the established law of the land, compel Naboth to give up the desired vineyard; but his covetousness and pride were so hurt at this unanticipated refusal, that, deeply affected, he went home, and, like a spoiled child, threw himself upon his bed, turned his face to the wall, and refused to take his food! Poor imbecile wretch! he was lord over ten-twelfths of the land, and became miserable because he could not add a poor man's vineyard to all that he possessed. As soon as his wife, the notorious Jezebel, understood the cause of his trouble, she bade him be of good cheer, for she would procure him the vineyard. The manner in which this wicked woman acquired and exercised her power over her weak and corrupt husband, is strikingly shown in the matter in question, which, perhaps, more than all the other affairs in which she was engaged, brings out her true character, uncovers the hell which she ever carried in her bosom, and displays the nature of that influence which she employed for purposes that were idolatrous and cruel.

Ahab, entirely under the control of Jezebel, after being severely reproved for not fulfilling his own pleasure, on the ground of that

* Graves's Lectures on the Pentateuch. Part ii., lect. iv.

supreme authority which he wielded, tacitly left the affair in her hands. She, therefore, wrote letters to the Elders, the Magistrates of the city of Jezreel, and sealed them with Ahab's signet, which he lent for that purpose, commanding them to proclaim a public fast, to set Naboth in an elevated station among the chiefs of the people, and to suborn false witnesses against him, who should depose that Naboth had blasphemed God and the King. The Magistrates, who appear to have been as corrupt as their mistress was wicked, did, without hesitation, what they were commanded; and the innocent and righteous Naboth was stoned to death, according to the law, outside the town. (Lev. xxiv. 16.) "Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead."

It is highly probable, that the children of Naboth perished with him, being, perhaps, put to death by the servile creatures of Jezebel; otherwise the deed of blood would have been useless and abortive, as the children would have been entitled to the heritage of the father. The destruction of the family of the Jezreelite is strongly intimated in the commission of the Most High to Jehu: "Surely I have seen the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the Lord." (2 Kings ix. 26.) Be this as it may, it seems that a usage had crept in, for the property of persons convicted of treason (and blasphemy was treason in Israel) to be estreated to the crown. There are numerous indications of this usage. If it did not exist, the estate of Naboth could not have lapsed to the crown, even if his children had shared his fate; and if it did exist, it was not necessary that the children should be slain to secure the estate to the King.

Jezebel, who had not scrupled at murder, under the abused forms of religion and of law, to accomplish her purpose, said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead." Although the Most High did not see fit to restrain these wicked men in the ungodly deeds which they committed, but suffered his faithful servant to be speedily removed from the evils of this world, into the rest remaining for his people; he soon gave proof that the eye of his justice had been watching all these infamous transactions. Ahab went down to Jezreel to take possession of the inheritance of his murdered subject, whose person and property he ought to have protected, and was made to hear the sentence of God from the mouth of the Prophet Elijah, who arrested him upon the very spot, and in the act of seizing the paternal estate of Naboth. "The word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab, King of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel." (1 Kings xxi. 17—19, 23.) This fearful prediction was

fulfilled, if not to the letter, on account of Ahab's temporary penitence, it was in its spirit, the result of which was the destruction of Ahab's race. Ahab died of the wounds which he received in a battle with the Syrians, according to a prediction of Micaiah, which the King disbelieved, but yet endeavoured to avert by disguising himself in the action. "And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the King of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. And the battle increased that day: and the King was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. So the King died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the King in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the Lord which he spake." (1 Kings xxii. 34—38.) Jezebel perished in the streets of Jezreel; and when "they went to bury her, they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. Wherefore they came again, and told him" (Jehu). "And he said, This is the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: and the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel." (2 Kings ix. 35—38.) The whole family was soon extirpated. "How oft is the candle of the wicked put out!" (Job xxi. 17.) The Almighty may permit his faithful servants to seal the truth with their blood; yet those who stretch out their hands against them do it to their own destruction; for the persecutors of the truth, and of those who propagate it, shall ultimately fall a prey to the wrathful indignation of Him who hath said, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my Prophets no harm." (1 Chron. xvi. 22.)

CHAPTER III.

ELIJAH. *State of Religion in Judea when Elijah appeared—Appearance of Elijah—His Name—Conduct of Ahab—Images—Baal—Astarte—A Drought threatened—How received—Prophets of the Most High—Elijah persecuted—Flees to Cherith—Afterwards to Zarephath—Awful State of the Country—His second Visit to Ahab—Obadiah—Ahab's Interview with the Prophet—Elijah's Challenge—The Trial—Its Success—The Destruction of the Priests of Baal—Elijah's Conduct vindicated—Locke—Warburton—Ahab's subsequent Interview with Jezebel—She threatens the Life of the Prophet—He flees into the Wilderness—His Despondency and Encouragement—His third Interview with Ahab—Ahaziah—Consults Baalzebub—Is reproved by the Prophet—The King threatens—His Servants are slain by Fire from Heaven—Elijah predicts his Death—Remarks on the Death of the Messengers—On the Right of punishing Heretics with the Sword—Bossuet quoted—Rev. Richard Watson—Schools of the Prophets—Elisha—Ascension of Elijah.*

THE first act recorded in the sacred Scriptures of Elijah's ministry is one of obedience. He was deputed by divine authority to rebuke a people who had long been strangers to the path of righteousness, who had deposed the Priests of the Most High, despised his ordinances, forsaken his holy place, and were, when this Prophet appeared, farther than ever astray. A frightful harvest of crime had sprung up among them. The seed that was sown by Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who first taught Israel to sin, had been most prolific. His successors zealously carried on the deadly work, which gathered at every step increasing strength, and cast a still deeper shade of pollution upon the land and its inhabitants, till Ahab, the son of Omri, arose, who "did evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel,* the daughter of Ethbaal, King of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal, in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove, and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the Kings of Israel that went before him." (1 Kings xvi. 30—33.)

In the midst of this overwhelming wickedness, Elijah the Tishbite makes his appearance. No warning of his approach is given, no tidings of his mission are communicated; but when Israel was steeped in guilt and depravity, this Prophet arises to "visit their offences with the rod." No mention is made of the place of his birth, nor of his tribe and lineage. He is introduced to our notice like another

* "This woman was active and bold, and fell into so great a degree of impurity and madness, that she built a temple to the god of the Tyrians, which they called 'Belus,' and planted a grove of all sorts of trees; she also appointed Priests and false Prophets to this god. The King, also, himself had many such about him; and so exceeded in madness and wickedness all that went before him." (Joseph. *Antiq.*, lib. viii., cap. xiii., sect. 1.) These are the false Prophets spoken of 1 Kings xviii., in the memorable contest at Mount Carmel; and again 1 Kings xxii., where they encourage Ahab to go down to Ramoth Gilead.

Melchisedek, (Gen. xiv. 18; Heb. vii. 1—3,) without any mention of his father or mother, or of the beginning of his days, as if he had dropped out of that cloudy chariot which, after his work was done on earth, conveyed him back to heaven; and hence we may account for the various and fanciful interpretations concerning his origin and person which are to be found in the writings of the Jewish commentators.* His very name, Elijah, or, as it is called in the New Testament, Elias, indicates some special mark of the divine authority; its literal signification being, "The Lord God is he;" and the designation of "the Tishbite" attached to it is thought by some to have been derived from Thisbe, the town or region where he was born;† others suppose that "Tishbite" means a "converter" or "reformer," deriving it from the Hebrew radical, שׁוּב

This is the limit of our information respecting the early history of Elijah, who was far more glorious in his ministry than any who had arisen since the days of Moses, although we are unable distinctly to associate his person with the family or habitation of any of God's people. How often from the darkest cloud we behold the lightnings glare most brilliant and imposing! So, likewise, the glories of Elijah's holiness shine forth with a more clear and majestic lustre from the deep mystery and gloom of surrounding shadows. Ahab was the most weak and wicked of all the Kings which the land of Israel had produced; and having married an idolater, he plunged recklessly into all the abominable superstitions of her nation. The ambitious woman was not content with this mark of the influence which she had over him: she resolved to effect the universal dissemination of her vicious principles. She possessed a powerful party in the kingdom, which, while it nestled itself under the fostering wing of royalty, embraced every opportunity to bid defiance to the opposition of the faithful servants of God; so that it was far from difficult to substitute her religion in place of the corrupt service which was rendered to the Most High. "When images are once introduced as objects of adoration, it little matters whom they represent; and it was easy for men, if scruples arose, to be persuaded that Baal and his fellows were no other than their own Jehovah under peculiar attributes. When they had once degraded his glory to the likeness of a calf that eateth hay, it was but a short step to give him another name and form. The apostasy was soon general. Baal had a temple and altar at Samaria, the worship of Astarte‡ was established, and both deities were furnished each with a long train of about *four hundred* Priests.§ It was amid such impieties that God interfered, and commanded Elijah to

* Thus by some he was supposed to have been miraculously descended from the tribe of Aaron; by others, to have been an angel sent from heaven; and by others, to have been Phinehas, the son of Aaron, who, after having lived a long time concealed, appeared again in the world, under the name of Elijah. See Stackhouse and Patrick, *in loc.*, and Lightfoot, Harmony of the Four Evangelists, 8vo., vol. iv., p. 399. Selden has given a full account of the last of the three opinions above referred to, in the second chapter of his Treatise, *De Successione in Pontificatum Hebræorum*.

† A town in Galilee, belonging to the tribe of Naphtali. (Tob. i. 2.) See also Relandi *Palæstina*, tom. ii., p. 1035.

‡ For a farther account of Astarte, see note A, p. 42.

§ For various opinions respecting Baal, see note B, p. 43.

go before Ahab, and denounce a drought upon the land. The manner in which this communication was received is a striking example of degeneracy. Saul had submissively listened to Samuel, and David to Nathan, notwithstanding the unwelcomeness of their message. But Ahab immediately sought the life of his rebuker, and began a cruel and general persecution of the Prophets of God. This class of men was maintained by Jehovah in constant succession among his people, in order to keep alive in them that spirituality to which their law, taken by itself, was unfavourable. They were to maintain those grand truths and doctrines which the law presumed upon, or typified, rather than expressed. They were God's peculiar servants and messengers, and after the establishment of kingly power were more than ever necessary to remind both ruler and people of the only true Potentate, and real source of all power and might. Good Kings received them with the utmost submission, while they were odious, above all men, to a wicked Government, which saw in these his Ministers a continual rebuke. When they would willingly put God out of sight, these men brought him immediately before them. They were God's spies upon them. They made them feel that there were bosoms full of purity and wisdom hourly arraigning it, and pleading against them before the throne of God; and they felt an awe which they would not avow, while the sense of it was intolerable. The Prophets were, therefore, ever the first to suffer in national calamities. Such, as St. Peter says, ever commence 'with the house of God.' (1 Peter iv. 17.) For wicked measures necessarily create their determined, because conscientious, opposition; and this opposition is charged with factious obstinacy from the fewness of its maintainers. Alas! the faithful servants of God, and only possessors of truth and wisdom, ever have been, and will be, a few. Of course, Jezebel was delighted to obtain any ground upon which to assail them; and it was not difficult to charge upon them, as represented in Elijah their head, all the miseries of the famine which was so sorely vexing the land."*

In the first account which is given of Elijah in the sacred volume, we find him delivering a message from the Lord of direful denunciation against the King of Israel, which he confirms by a solemn oath. Doubtless many previous warnings had been despised, and this punishment was inflicted both on the Monarch and upon his subjects for their gross contumacy and rejection of the Prophet. He declared, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." (1 Kings xvii. 1.) It can easily be imagined that the idolatrous King and Queen were greatly incensed against Elijah for having foretold and prayed that those calamities would befall the land. For a time, they might endeavour to attribute the whole to natural causes, and not to the instrumentality of the man of God; and therefore, however they might be inclined to treat him with contempt, they would not proceed immediately to punish him. Affairs at length assumed a serious and terrific aspect; for three years and a half "the heaven was shut up, and great famine was throughout all the land;" (Luke

* Evans's Scripture Biography. First Series. 12mo. pp. 164—166. London. 1834.

iv. 25 ;) and yet the people remained impenitent. The various hosts of creation are at the divine command, so that when the Most High directs, they are ready to go forth as the executioners of his vengeance to chastise or destroy ungodly sinners. The rain falls not by chance, and frequently God "turneth a fruitful land into barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell therein." (Psalm cvii. 34.) When, therefore, Ahab and Jezebel beheld the fearful consequences of this scourge, instead of turning to the Lord with contrition, they sought the life of the Prophet, as though he, and not their iniquities, had occasioned the calamity ; but he was miraculously protected. He was commanded, in the first instance, to go and hide himself in the glen of the Cherith, which was one of the tributaries of the Jordan. "Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook ; and I have commanded the ravens to feed* thee there." (1 Kings xvii. 3, 4.) Accordingly he went forth from the presence of the King to the lonely brook, leaning on the arm of Him who is mightier than the mightiest, and looking only to that sure word of promise which he had received.

In process of time, the faith of Elijah was tried in a different way. As some suppose, for a period of one year God miraculously provided for the wants of his servant ; but, ere long, the drought which himself had predicted exhausted the brook. "It came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there : behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." (1 Kings xvii. 7—10.) But this widow of Zarephath (or, as it is called in the New Testament, "Sarepta") was herself worn down with poverty and hunger. When Elijah saw her first at the city-gate, she was gathering sticks, that she might go in and dress the last handful of meal that remained in her barrel for herself and her son. He asked her to bring him a morsel of bread in her hand ; but "she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse : and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not ; go and do as thou hast said : but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah." (1 Kings xvii. 12—16.) The faith of this woman was exemplary. She was an inhabitant of that heathen land whence the idolatrous Jezebel had come, to share the power of Israel's sceptre, and swell the catalogue of Israel's sins. Yet she was a believer in the God of Israel. His own people had cast away the law and testimonies which he had given to them ; but she, who had sprung not from the seed of Abraham, obeyed the command.

* See this subject pursued at length in note C, p. 44.

She received a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, and verily she received "a Prophet's reward."

During Elijah's residence in Sarepta, the widow's son sickened and died. The distressed mother, under deep convictions of her guilt, considered the calamity as a judgment inflicted upon her by the Prophet: she seems to have thought within herself, that as God had shut up heaven from pouring down refreshing showers upon a guilty nation in consequence of his servant's prayer, so she was now suffering from a similar cause. She had looked upon Elijah as an herald of the Lord; to his knowledge she must have turned for instruction, to his power for protection; and when that protection was withdrawn, as it seemed to be in the present instance, and interfered not to support the drooping spirit of the child, what could she think but that anger had taken the place of mercy, and that the messenger of peace had become the minister of vengeance? So deeply did she feel the calamity as a judgment of which he was the instrument, that she dreaded his residence beneath her roof, and was impatient for his departure. But in answer to his fervent prayer the child revived; the Almighty afresh manifesting his power. Before this event no such miracle had been worked upon the earth. A poor, desolate widow obtained what would have been denied to Kings. "He raised her son from the dead; and was thus a forerunner of Him that should raise Lazarus, and the son of the widow of Nain, and shall come again in glory to raise the dead at the last day." *

The wretchedness of the country was now extreme. The terror of the Lord was real. It came, not, as it often does, in the havoc of war, or the darkness of the storm, or the swiftness of the whirlwind, but with the withering touch of famine. There was no rain nor dew, to make glad the hills and valleys of the land, nor provide food for its people. Beauty and strength and greatness alike sank beneath the plague; every form of misery which the pencil of inspired Prophets has portrayed, in visitations such as these, must have been realized, to the very uttermost, in the present infliction of divine anger: † "the land mourning,—the gates thereof languishing,—the cry of their cities ascending up to heaven,—the ploughmen covering their heads with shame,—the hind, also, calving in the field, and forsaking it because there was no grass,—and the wild asses standing in the high places, and snuffing up the wind like dragons,—the nobles sending their little ones to the waters, and seeing them return with their vessels empty,—their eyes failing with tears, and their visage blacker than coal,—the tongue of the sucking child cleaving to the roof of his mouth for thirst,—the young children asking bread, and no man breaking it unto them." (Jer. xiv. 2—6.) Such were the signs of Israel's desolation, and such the fearful evidences of God's wrath upon his people, when Elijah was commanded to go up from Zarephath, and seek once more the presence of the King. He immediately obeyed. On his way he met Obadiah, the steward of

* Evans's Scripture Biography, p. 166.

† Discourses on Elijah and John the Baptist. By the Rev. James S. M. Anderson, M.A. Second Edition, p. 9. London, 1835.

the King's household: from him he learned the melancholy tidings of the destruction of all his brethren of prophecy, who had remained in the land, and whom Obadiah had made a vain attempt to save by hiding a hundred of them, by fifty, in a cave, and supporting them on bread and water; so that he only remained a Prophet of the Lord. Elijah immediately requested the steward to announce him to the King, who was exceedingly alarmed, and apparently hurt by the unkindness of the command, and replied, "What have I sinned, that thou shouldest expose me to Ahab's rage, who will certainly slay me for not apprehending thee, for whom he has so long and so anxiously sought in all lands, and in confederate countries, that they should not harbour a traitor, whom he looks upon as the author of the famine?" Satisfied with Elijah's reply to this appeal, in which all the fears which he expressed are simultaneously removed, he resolved to become the Prophet's messenger to the King. Elijah said, "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him to-day. So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah." (1 Kings xviii. 15, 16.)

When Ahab heard the tidings which the Governor of his house communicated, he went to the interview. More than three years had passed since he had seen the Prophet, when he denounced the judgments which were now devastating the country. Everything that was gloomy and terrific tended to suggest to the mind of Ahab the name and prophecy of Elijah. The imbecile King had not Jezebel immediately at his ear to incite and support him; consequently, the dignified air of the man of God appalled him; and though his troubled spirit was driven to the highest pitch of hatred and exasperation, and the object of his wrath was placed within his grasp, whom he and his emissaries had sought in vain, he feared to lay hold upon him, and was content to reproach the Prophet with the cause of the national affliction. "Art thou," he said, "he that troubleth Israel?" Elijah indignantly flung back the charge upon the King, and, with a laudable intrepidity, reproved the furious persecutor, and attributed all the miseries of the land to that infamous system of idolatry which he and his family had adopted. He raised his voice, as a messenger of God, against iniquity, although enthroned in high places, and, assured of the help of the Most High, he feared not the anger of the murderer of his brethren the Prophets, but challenged him to summon the whole of the Priests of Baal to meet him in the face of all Israel, at Mount Carmel, that the controversy might be decided, whether the King or the Prophet were the troubler of Israel. To this proposal Ahab consented, and God directed the result.

Elijah offered to decide this question between God and Baal, not by Scripture, but by a miracle from heaven; for an appeal to the word of God would have fallen powerless on the minds of the infidel multitude. As fire was the element over which Baal was supposed to preside, the Prophet proposes that, two bullocks being slain, and laid each upon a distinct altar, the one for Baal, the other for Jehovah, whichever should be consumed by fire, must proclaim whose the people of Israel were, and whom it was their duty to

serve.* The Israelites, probably, were not altogether ignorant how the Most High had formerly answered by fire, (Gen. iv. 4; Lev. ix. 24; Judges vi. 21; xiii. 20; 1 Chron. xxi. 26; 2 Chron. vii. 1,) which furnished evidence for the authority of Elijah's appeal, which the adversaries of the Prophet could not gainsay or resist. "The spectacle was sufficient to stir every heart that could feel in Israel. There they saw before them the Prophet of the true and only God, whom they had been hunting down for more than three years, standing all alone, solitary survivor of his persecuted brethren, brought as it were to his trial without an advocate, without a friend; and this very trial granted him as a favour. He came before them weary and worn, the despised Minister of an abandoned God. Opposed to him, and arrayed in costly vesture, accompanied with all the pomp and circumstance that could win the eye and ear, and allure the imagination, and which idolatry knows so well how to employ, with robes, and fillets, and standards, and instruments of music, stood the Prophets of Baal. But the solitary old man was not to be dismayed at the sight of such fearful odds. He kept up his high and gallant bearing, amid his seeming helplessness, and, bold in the help and cause of his God, recked neither of Prophets, nor of people. One who had to plead a cause less sacred and uncompromising, would have endeavoured to win the favourable attention of these parties. He, on the contrary, rebuked them with a bold and taunting severity, and with all the air of a superior." †

Confident of success, Elijah enters the lists. The sides of Carmel are crowded with Israel's people; the King and his idolatrous Prophets have accepted the challenge of the man of God; the altars are raised, the limbs of the slaughtered victims are laid upon them, and Baal is invoked to consume the sacrifice. From morning even until noon, his votaries offered their supplications, and rent the air with their clamorous shoutings. Their frantic outcries are repeated, the blood gushes out beneath their knives and lancets, they leap wildly upon the altar, and finally relinquish the effort in despair. Elijah, having rebuked their folly and wickedness with the sharpest irony, offered up his prayer. The Priests of Baal prayed long; the Prophet of Jehovah short, charging God with the care of his covenant, of his truth, and of his glory; when, behold, "the fire came down, licked up the water, and consumed not only the bullock, but the very stones of the altar also." The effect of this on the mind of the people was what the Prophet desired. Acknowledging the awful presence of the Godhead, they exclaim, as with one voice, "The Lord he is the God! The Lord he is the God!" Thus were the hearts of the people once again turned to their God, the hearts of the disobedient to the

* The altar which was repaired by Elijah, seems to have remained for a long time, and to have given a sacredness to Carmel, which was acknowledged many centuries after, even by the heathen conquerors of the country. Tacitus tells us, that the Emperor Vespasian offered up sacrifices on that Mount, when he consulted Basilides, the Priest of its god, and thus describes it, "Est Judeam inter Syriamque Carmelus, ita vocant montem Deumque; nec simulacrum Deo, aut templum; sic tradidere majores: ara tantum et reverentia."—Tac. *Hist.*, lib. ii., cap. 78.

† Evans's Scripture Biography, p. 168.

wisdom of the just. So far, the glory of Jehovah was vindicated; but another work remained to be accomplished, a work of chastisement and terror. Seizing the opportunity whilst the people's hearts were warm with the fresh conviction of this miracle, he said, "Take the Prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon,* and slew them there." (1 Kings xviii. 40.)

Some have manifested offence at this portion of the history of the persecuted Prophet. They have been at a loss to know how one man should thus be the instrument to inflict death on many, or why the superstitious worship of a mistaken creed should be so signally and severely punished. It is clear that Elijah acted throughout by and with the divine authority. As it was the power of God alone which could inflict this death, so it was the will of God alone which ordained it. The word of God expressly declared idolatry to be a capital crime to the sons of Israel. The record of the law is as follows:—"If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the Lord thy God, in transgressing his covenant, and hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die." (Deut. xvii. 2—5.) The principle and authority of the Jewish law explain the ground of this enactment. It had been, from its first institution, and still continued to be, a theocracy: a government, that is, which, through the medium of temporal rewards and punishments, was carried on by the visible interposition of the Almighty. The commonwealth of Israel, therefore, and the church of Israel, were one and the same. Each was identified with the other. "The laws established there, concerning the worship of one invisible Deity, were the civil laws of that people, and a part of their political government, in which God himself was Legislator." † To renounce Jehovah as King, was to reject him as God; and to reject him as God, was to renounce him as King. And since idolatry was to reject him as God, idolatry was evidently treason in the Jewish state. "By necessity, therefore, as well as right, idolatry was punishable by the civil laws of a theocracy; it being the greatest crime that could be committed against the state, as tending, by unavoidable consequences, to dissolve the commonwealth."‡ Hence the enactments of the Mosaic

* This is not the first time that the channel of that stream drank the blood of the slain; for when the powers from heaven fought against the chariots and armies of Jabin's hosts, and "the stars in their courses against Sisera," it was the same river of Kishon that "swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon." (Judges v. 20, 21.) Its waters were then swollen and impetuous, but now well-nigh dried up, by the long burning drought. "The battle of the warrior" had then gathered round its banks, "with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood;" (Isaiah ix. 5;) but now, with deliberate and solemn judgment, the hand of the avenger executed the sentence of God's wrath, and cast therein the bodies of unholy Prophets. (Anderson's Discourses.)

† Locke on Toleration, p. 37.

‡ Warburton's Divine Legation, book v., sect. ii., p. 27.

institution; hence the signal punishments recorded in the Mosaic history; hence the destruction of Baal's Prophets by Elijah at the brook Kishon.*

This transaction, with the removal of the curse of the drought, is one of the most memorable in the history of the ancient church, whether we take into consideration its consequences, its example, or the character which Elijah sustained throughout the whole. Idolatry did indeed again rear its head, and exercise a fearfully demoralizing influence; but its power was effectually broken, and hence its struggles were principally for existence, rather than dominion. For a time the nation enjoyed tranquillity; but the troubles of the man of God were soon as great as before. Immediately after the defeat of the Priests of Baal, Ahab arrived at his residence in Jezreel, and speedily announced to the imperious Jezebel the events of the day. We can easily imagine with what emotions he would enter her apartment and say: "The Tishbite has triumphed! Fire from heaven has confirmed his word. Upon his prayer I beheld, with my own eyes, flames fall from the skies, consume the burnt-offering, the wood, the stones, and lick up the water in the trench. All the people can bear witness to it. They fell on their faces, and cried out, as with one voice, that Jehovah is God. The Priests of Baal are slain; Elijah and the people have destroyed them, and their blood is flowing in the brook Kishon. They were laughed at as liars, and impotent deceivers. Their authority and their worship is gone for ever. There is universal enthusiasm for Elijah. He is a Prophet of the living God. The miracle on Carmel has placed it beyond doubt, and these heavy rains speedily confirm it. At his command, they fall: he closed heaven, and he has now opened it again." † At this unwelcome narrative all that was fiendish and diabolical in the idolatrous Queen was excited; her features gathered blackness as a storm, and she resolved to gratify her blood-thirsty revenge. The weak and deluded King did not dare to think differently from his wife; he also wanted firmness, and doubtless an inclination to support the man of God. No acknowledgment is made of the hand of the Most High, no confession of guilt, no supplication for pardon. Elijah is the individual to whom everything is ascribed, as if his voice alone could have called down fire from heaven, or his single arm have stained the waters of Kishon with the blood of idolaters. Against this Prophet, therefore, Jezebel directed her fury, and "sent a messenger unto him, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper-tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers." (1 Kings xix. 2—4.) How inexplicable is all this!

* Anderson's Discourses on Elijah, pp. 61, 62.

† Elijah the Tishbite. From the German of Dr. F. W. Krummacher. Revised by the Rev. R. F. Walker, 12mo. p. 101. London.

"The man who had not shrunk from rebuking the impious King upon his throne, nor feared to seek his sustenance from the ravens of the valley, or the scanty meal and oil of the Zidonian widow; he who had stood undaunted amid a host of enemies, and raised up before them an altar of triumphant victory, is now a trembling fugitive, hastening from the wrath of an idolatrous woman, murmuring at his trials, and praying that he might die. The language which now fell from his lips shows that his flight was not such an one as prudence might have justified, or to which he might have deliberately resorted, in order to collect fresh strength for the renewal of his labours; but that it was prompted by weariness and alarm. Had his prayer been like the sighing of the weary traveller for rest, or of the prisoner for liberty, or the exile for the home of his fathers; nay, had it resembled that holy aspiration which constrained St. Paul, in after-ages, to desire 'to depart, and be with Christ,' it would have been consistent with the character and purpose of a faithful servant of God; but now, it was a call for death, out of a very weariness of life, and impatience of suffering."* How truly did the Apostle James describe Elijah, as "a man subject to like passions as ourselves," and what a lesson of warning does this illustration of it convey to all!

The Most High was not unmindful of his faithful and much-enduring servant. He sent an angel to feed him, and in the strength of this food he went forty days and forty nights, until he reached the Mount Horeb. Here the Almighty threw a glorious dignity around him, and, by a fearful exhibition of his divine power, convinced him that He was nigh to direct and to help. In this sublime and awful manifestation which he experienced, it was announced that he must go and anoint Hazael, King over Syria, Jehu, King over Israel, and Elisha Prophet in his own place, ere death should terminate his mortal career. When the Almighty had comforted his servant, by referring to these three instruments whom he had prepared to vindicate his insulted honour, he forthwith assured the Prophet of his mistake, when he said, "I, even I only am left," by informing him, that there were "left seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." (1 Kings xix. 18.)

For a period of nearly six years we lose sight of Elijah, during which time the weak and wicked Ahab was pursuing his career of idolatry and crime, aided and abetted by the execrable Jezebel. At the expiration of this term, the Prophet is once more sent to the King, to denounce sore and impending judgments upon him and his idolatrous wife, for the murder of unoffending Naboth; which began to operate (their execution being mercifully delayed on the temporary repentance of the Monarch) on his son Ahaziah; who, having received some dangerous injury, sent, after the idolatrous notions of his devoted family, to consult "Baalzebub,† the god of Ekron." But "the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers

* Anderson's Discourses, p. 71.

† For some further considerations on this subject, see note D, p. 47.

of the King of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed." (2 Kings i. 2—4.) The messengers are overawed, and go back to the King: upon his inquiring the cause of their speedy return, they repeat to him, without any reserve or alteration, the words which they had heard. How strange and unaccountable! Who could this be, who thus intruded between the King and the indulgence of his will, and so abruptly compelled him to turn his attention from the idol of Ekron, to the God of Israel? He, therefore, asks the messengers, "What manner of man was he which came up to meet you, and told you these words? And they answered him, He was an hairy man,* and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite." (2 Kings i. 7, 8.) Ahaziah immediately recognised the man. The message could come from no one but him, whom his mother, if not his father, had taught him to look upon as the unrelenting enemy of his house. A crowd of associations would throng upon his mind. The terrible denunciation which had been accomplished of the three years' drought; the signal triumph which had been achieved over the Prophets of Baal, on Mount Carmel; the withering, blighting curse which was pronounced when his father went down to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth; all, all were the works of the Prophet, the Tishbite;—his voice, his very appearance were associated with them all; his stern, unbending figure, the rough hair-garment thrown around him, the leathern girdle upon his loins,—these were the ensigns which had marked the Preacher of righteousness, in the days of Ahab; and these now belonged to the man who had turned aside his own messengers, from their mad and impious journey to Philistia.†

With desperate impiety, Ahaziah determined to chastise the insolence of the Prophet; and for this purpose he despatched a Captain with fifty men to seize him, who, with impious mockery, addressed him, "Thou man of God, the King hath said, Come down. And Elijah answered and said to the Captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty." (2 Kings i. 9, 10.) Probably, attributing this destruction of his men to some natural cause, or resolving to maintain a reckless contest with the King of Kings, he presumptuously ordered another band of soldiers upon the same errand; but they met with a similar fate. Still the King was unconvinced, and with consummate arrogance he sent a third company; but the officer, intimidated by the previous display of divine power, sued the Prophet for his life. Elijah, being directed from above, complied with the

* Tremellius interprets it, "Veste villosâ cinctus," girt with a hairy garment. This was the usual habit of the ancient Prophets, as appears from Zech. xiii. 4, where he is speaking of the false Prophets, "Neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive." See also Sir Thomas Brown's Inquiries into Vulgar Errors, on the Picture of John the Baptist, book v., cap. xv., folio. London, 1646.

† Anderson's Discourses on Elijah, &c., p. 130.

request; and with unflinching fidelity he stood before the King, to whom he declared the righteous indignation of God, and his speedy death.

See here the power of God, revealing his wrath from heaven "against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." (Rom. i. 18.) It is evident, that Elijah was in this, as in every other recorded instance of his ministry, a special instrument to accomplish the divine will. It was no personal feeling of anger that had opened his lips to pronounce the desolation of famine upon Israel, no indulgence of personal triumph that had led him to destroy the Prophets of Baal at the brook Kishon, no gratification of personal malice that had led him to denounce death to Ahab, and now, again, to Ahaziah; neither was it the working of personal indignation that now invoked God's consuming fire upon his enemies. In all and each of these cases, the authority was that of God, the power was that of God.* Let none, therefore, wrest the Scripture to his own destruction, nor look upon it as furnishing any precedent, or encouragement to persecute in our own day, the enemies of the Lord. The righteous spirit may, indeed, be "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked," and long to vindicate the glory of God, by their subjection; but the weapons of the Christian's warfare are not carnal, but spiritual, and "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." (2 Cor. x. 4.) Call to mind that event which happened in the days of the Saviour, with reference to this feeling. It was when he was passing through Samaria, on his journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, (and probably near to that part of Samaria, in which the events which we are considering occurred,) that two of his disciples, James and John, angry at the refusal of certain Samaritans to receive Jesus into their village, came to him, and said, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." (Luke ix. 54—56.) Truly, they were ignorant of their own spirit. "Elijah was God's minister for the execution of so severe a judgment: they were but the servants of their own impotent anger. There was fire in their breasts, which God never kindled: far was it from the Saviour of men, to second their earthly fire with his heavenly. He came, indeed, to send fire upon earth, but to warm, not to burn; and if to burn, not

* Some have blamed the Prophet for destroying these men, by bringing down fire from heaven upon them. But they do not consider that it was just as possible for Elijah to bring down fire from heaven, as for them to do it. God alone could send the fire; and as He is just and good, He could not have destroyed these men, had there not been a sufficient cause to justify the act. It was not to please Elijah, or to gratify any vindictive humour in him, that God thus acted; but to show His *power* and his *justice*. No entreaty of Elijah could have induced God to have performed an act that was *wrong* in itself. Elijah personally had no concern in the business: God led him simply to *announce*, on these occasions, what he himself had determined *to do*. "If I be a man of God," that is, "as surely as I am a man of God, fire shall come from heaven, and shall consume thee and thy fifty." This is the literal meaning of the original; and by it we see, that Elijah's words were only *declarative*, and not *imprecatory*. (Dr. A. Clarke.)

the persons of men, but their corruptions. How much more safe is it for us to follow the meek Prophet of the New Testament, than that fervent Prophet of the Old! Let the matter of our prayers be the sweet dews of mercy, not the fire of vengeance." * The attempt made by the officers of Ahaziah to seize Elijah, was a direct defiance of God's authority. Their King was but God's vicegerent: his injunctions, therefore, whatever they might be, could not nullify or supersede the divine command. Nay, the attempt to do so was, as we have seen, from the nature of a Theocracy, an act of treason against Jehovah; and the instruments of such treason were punishable, and punished by death.† Far otherwise were the circumstances of the case referred to in the New Testament. The Theocracy had ceased; and with it had ceased also its temporary enactments. The ministration of death had given way to the ministration of the Spirit; the terrors which had been revealed in the earthquake, and the wind, and fire, were forgotten in the still small voice of Him who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them; who speaketh not in judgment, but in mercy; and who, in every word and work of his, hath invited the weary and the heavy laden to rest, the mourner to be patient, the penitent to rejoice, and the oppressed, not to be "overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good." This was the gracious power which restrained the impetuous indignation of the Apostles, and taught them that Elijah's conduct was no precedent for them. And if not for them, still less is it for ourselves; still less does it become us, who are armed with no special authority from above, to call down vengeance upon the heads of our opposing brethren.‡ Vengeance is not ours, but God's. "I will repay, saith the Lord." §

The remarks of the Rev. Richard Watson are well worthy of perusal. "The Jews, under their Theocracy, were subject to a system of temporal rewards and punishments, immediately inflicted or

* Bishop Hall's Contemplations. Book xix., cont. iv. Works. Vol. ii., p. 78. Oxford, 1837.

† The guilt of Ahaziah's Captains may be best understood, by contrasting it with the conduct of the followers of Saul, who refused to slay Abimelech and the Priests of Nob, at his command. "And the King said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the Priests of the Lord; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not show it to me. *But the servants of the King would not put forth their hand to fall upon the Priests of the Lord.*" (1 Sam. xxii. 17.) (Anderson.)

‡ Anderson's Discourses.

§ It is painful to observe, how Bossuet, one of the brightest ornaments of the Romish Church, has erred upon this point, and how he has misrepresented the feelings of Protestants, with regard to it. In his *Histoire des Variations des Eglises Protestantes*, liv. x., p. 51, he uses these words: "L'Eglise Romaine permet l'exercise de la puissance du gloire dans les matières de la religion et de la conscience, chose aussi qui ne peut être révoquée en doute, sans enerver et comme estropier la puissance publique; de sorte qu'il n'y a point d'illusion plus dangereuse, que de donner la souffrance pour un caractère de vraie Eglise." In the former part of the same paragraph, he maintains, the Protestants agree with members of the Romish Church, as to the right of punishing heretics with the sword; and in proof of it, he refers to the work of Luther, *De Magist.*, tom. iii., to Calvin, who condemned Servetus to death, and to Melancthon, who expresses in a letter to Calvin, his approbation of that act. A little further on, he says, "Je ne connois parmi les Chrétiens, que les Sociniens et les Anabaptistes qui s'opposent à cette doctrine;" an assertion which is as much at variance with the fact, as the authority which he seeks to derive from the conduct of Luther, Calvin, and Melancthon, in the instances referred to, is opposed to the spirit of true Protestantism. (Anderson.)

bestowed by Jehovah, their Governor. In this case the King had sent to apprehend God's Prophet and representative, and had been guilty of a crime against the Divine Majesty, which was thus publicly punished. It was a case in which God himself interposed to defend his servant, by a single vengeance upon a wicked Prince and his servants. But in the case of these erring disciples, the matter was one of national prejudice, and personal resentment; and into such hands God would not put his thunderbolts. The genius of the Gospel is also essentially different from that of the law. In the latter, civil government was blended with religion, and God acted as judge; but under the Gospel, we stand only in spiritual relations, and the time of judgment is deferred to *one day*, to be executed by that *one man*, whom God hath appointed. 'Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation;' and, after the example of Christ, all his followers ought to be occupied only in the work of saving and blessing men, leaving vengeance to Him to whom it belongs, and to that future time when He who only can be an infallible judge in the case, shall 'give to every man according as his works shall be.'" *

The interview with Ahaziah was the last public effort which the Prophet made to reform Israel; and now his active, though suffering, career draws to a close. Conscious of his speedy departure, he remitted not his customary diligence, but, in company with his faithful attendant Elisha, he spends his remaining hours in making a circuit from Gilgal, near the Jordan, to Bethel, and from thence to Jericho, to visit the schools of the Prophets,† in order to impart instruction, and pronounce his last benediction to the students. The whole brotherhood appear to have had the fact of his departure revealed, and announced to Elisha, "that the Lord would take away his master from his head that day." When they reached the Jordan, Elijah smote the waters with his folded mantle, and they divided

* Watson's Exposition, *in loco*.

† In the middle period of the Jewish history of civilization, from the time of Samuel, to that of Jeremiah and Ezra, these assemblies occur under a double appellation: 1. *Schools of the Prophets*, in the first part of that period; and, 2. *Assemblies of the wise*, in the latter part. Of the existence of such schools or meetings, so early as the time of Moses, but faint traces are found, in comparing Exodus xviii. 13—26, with Num. xi. 24—29, where the eminent men, whom Moses used to consult on important affairs, receive the same designation (of Prophets) as the members of the Prophet schools, in the subsequent ages. But in the time of Samuel, we find more distinct proofs of their existence. (1 Sam. ix. 9; x. 5—11; xix. 18, *seq.*; 1 Chron. xxv. 6, 7; 2 Kings ii. 3; ii. 15, 16; iv. 38, 43; Isai. viii. 18, 19; Prov. i. 2—6; xxv. 1; Eccles. i. 2; xii. 8; vii. 27; xii. 9—11.) These institutions were chiefly intended to rouse, develope, and strengthen the powers of thought, by mutual instruction, communication, criticism, and controversy; to hear public teachers, counsellors, and leaders of the people, and the Monarch; to save from oblivion the sayings and speeches of ancient times, by collecting them in proper order; and to rear from among them, teachers and writers for the public. That the so called (sons) pupils of the Prophets, were not boys, but grown men, is evident from 1 Kings xx. 35, *et seq.*; 2 Kings ii. 15, 16; where mention is made of fifty *strong men*, the pupils of the Prophets, who had assembled at Jericho; as also from 2 Kings iv. 40. The places where these schools had an existence, were Ramah, (1 Sam. xix. 18—24,) Bethel, (2 Kings ii. 3,) Jericho, (2 Kings ii. 5,) Gilgal. (2 Kings iv. 38; vi. 1.) By comparing 1 Kings xviii. 20, with 2 Kings ii. 25, there seems to have been another such place somewhere in Mount Carmel.—*Kitto, sub voce.*

hither and thither, and gave them a dry passage to the other bank. The Prophet then asked his intended successor, what he should do for him before he was taken away: the latter solicited a double portion of his spirit. Elijah, acknowledging the magnitude of the request, promised the grant on the contingency of Elisha seeing him at the moment of his separation from him. As they went forward, walking and talking, "there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." (2 Kings ii. 11.)

NOTES.

Note A.—Page 29.

Astarte,—in Heb. עַשְׁתֹּרֶת (1 Kings xi. 5,) is the name of a goddess of the Sidonians, (1 Kings xi. 5, 33,) and also of the Philistines, (1 Sam. xxxi. 10,) whose worship was introduced among the Israelites during the period of the Judges, (Judges ii. 13; 1 Sam. vii. 4,) was celebrated by Solomon himself, and was finally put down by Josiah. (2 Kings xxiii. 13.) She is frequently mentioned in connexion with Baal, as the corresponding female divinity; (Judges ii. 13;) and, from the addition of the words, "and all the host of heaven," in 2 Kings xxiii. 4, it is probable that she represented one of the celestial bodies. There is also reason to believe that she is meant by the "Queen of heaven," in Jer. vii. 18; xliv. 17; whose worship is there said to have been solemnized by burning incense, pouring libations, and offering cakes. Further, by comparing the two passages, 2 Kings xxiii. 4, and Jer. viii. 2, which last speaks of the "sun and moon, and all the hosts of heaven whom they served," we may conclude, that the moon was worshipped under the names of "Queen of heaven" and of Ashtoreth, provided the connexion between these titles is established. This constitutes nearly the sum of all the indications in the Old Testament concerning Ashtoreth. The rites of her worship, if we may assume their resembling those which profane authors describe as paid to the cognate goddesses, in part agree with the few indications in the Old Testament, and in part complete the brief notices there, into an accordant picture. The "cakes" mentioned in Jer. vii. 18,—which are called in Hebrew כַּוָּנִים—were also known to the Greeks by the name χαβῶνες, and were by them made in the shape of a sickle, in reference to the new moon. Among animals, the dove, the crab, and, in later times, the lion, were sacred to her; and among fruits, the pomegranate. No blood was shed on her altar; but male animals, and chiefly kids, were sacrificed to her. (Tacit. Hist., ii. 3.) Hence some suppose that the reason why Judah promised the harlot a kid was, that she might sacrifice it to Ashtoreth. The most prominent part of her worship, however, consisted of those libidinous orgies which Augustine, who was an eye-witness of their horrors in Carthage, describes with such indignation. (*De Civit. Dei*, ii., 3.) Her Priests were eunuchs in women's attire, (the peculiar name of whom is קְדֵשִׁים *sacri, i. e., cinœdi Galli*, 1 Kings xiv. 24,) and women, (קְדֵשׁוֹת *sacræ, i. e., meretrices*, Hosea iv. 14, which term ought to be distinguished from ordinary harlots, זוֹנוֹת) who, like the Bayaderes of India, prostituted themselves to enrich the temple of this goddess. The prohibition in Deut. xxiii. 18, appears to allude to the dedication of such funds to such a purpose. As for the places consecrated to her worship, although

the numerous passages in which the authorized version has erroneously rendered אשרה by *grove*, are to be deducted, there are yet several occasions on which gardens and shady trees are mentioned as peculiar seats of (probably her) lascivious rites. (Isai. i. 29; lxv. 3; 1 Kings xiv. 23; Hosea iv. 13; Jer. ii. 20; iii. 13.) She also had several temples. (1 Sam. xxxi. 10.) (Kitto's Cyclopedia.)

Note B.—Page 29.

The frequent recurrence of the word "Baal," or its plural, "Baalim," in Scripture,—especially in that part of it more immediately connected with this subject,—has led me to give the following summary respecting it from Selden and others:—

The title of the Phœnician god "Baal," and of the Chaldæan "Bel," is derived from the Hebrew word בַּעַל which signifies "Lord;" the former retaining, the latter omitting, the letter ע. According to the author of the Alexandrine Chronicle, and Cedremus, it was the interpretation of the name of "Mars," given by the Assyrians to the deified successor of King Ninus, the founder of the Assyrian monarchy.

Dean Prideaux says, that Bel is supposed by some to have been the same with Nimrod, and to have been called Bel from his dominion, and Nimrod from his rebellion; for this is the signification of the word "Nimrod," in the Jewish and Chaldean languages. The former, he states, was his Babylonish name, by reason of his empire in that place; and the latter his Scripture name, by reason of his rebellion, in revolting from God to follow his own wicked designs.

The title of "Baal," or "Lord," thus bestowed upon the objects of idolatry, was, in fact, an assumption of dignity belonging only to the true God; and a proof of this is found in Hosea ii. 16: "And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi;" (that is, "my husband;") "and shalt call me no more Baali," (that is, "my Lord.") "For I will take away the name of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name."

It were useless to detail the various forms under which the service of Baal was conducted, or the objects which are supposed to have represented him; but it may be observed, that the Phœnicians worshipped the sun, under his name, believing it to be the supreme divinity of heaven; and the moon, under the name of Astarte, or Ashtoreth. In Zidon, a sea-town of Phœnicia, he was also worshipped under the title of the "Marine Jupiter." (See Hesychius, *in loc.*)

We may trace, further, the veneration in which Baal or Belus was held in Phœnicia, by the reference which is made to his name, in the first book of the Æneid, l. 728—730.

> "Hic regina gravem gemmis auroque poposcit,
> Implevitque mero, pateram; quam Belus, et omnes
> A Belo soliti."

The termination of many of the Punic names, (for example, Hannibal, Hasdrubal, Adherbal,) is another evidence of the acknowledgment of the Phœnician idol by the Carthaginians; and is an instance of their conformity with the general custom of the nations from whom they sprang, in adding, by way of honour to their own names, the titles of their gods.

There is abundant and conclusive testimony to prove that the Asiatic Baal was the same with the European Jupiter or Ζεύς; and, as the name of Jupiter received a different meaning, according to the designations appended to it, of Serapis, Olympius, &c., so the generic term of Baal was

applied to denote different specific objects, according to the word added to it; for example, Baal-Peor, the god of the Moabites, Baal-Zephon, Baal-Berith, the idol of the Shechemites, &c.

The worship of the god Belinus, or Belenus, among the ancient Gauls and Britons, is supposed to have been derived from that of Baal; and not only have monuments been discovered in various parts of our island, with inscriptions which bear testimony to this effect, but traces of his name and worship are to be found existing in various parts of the United Kingdom. The observance of the custom of "Bel-tein," in Scotland, for example, is thus described:—On the first day of May, which is called "Bel-tan," or "Bel-tein," or "Baal's fire," all the boys in a township or hamlet, meet in the moors. They cut a table in the green sod, of a round figure, by casting a trench in the ground, of such circumference as to hold the whole company. They kindle a fire, and dress a repast of eggs and milk of the consistence of a custard. They knead a cake of oatmeal, which is toasted at the embers against a stone. After the custard is eaten up, they divide the cake into so many portions, as similar as possible to one another in size and shape, as there are persons in the company. They daub one of these portions all over with charcoal, until it be perfectly black. They put all the cakes into a bonnet. Every one, blindfold, draws out a portion. He who holds the bonnet is entitled to the last bit. Whoever draws the black piece, is the devoted person who is to be sacrificed to Baal, whose favour they mean to implore in rendering the year productive of the sustenance of man and beast. There is little doubt of these inhuman sacrifices having been once offered in this country, as well as in the East, although they now pass from the act of sacrificing, and only compel the devoted person to leap three times through the flames, with which the ceremonies of this festival are closed.

Similar customs are observed in parts of Ireland, Wales, and Lancashire. It is said, in accordance with many other testimonies, that "the recognition of the pagan divinity, Baal, may still be discovered in Scotland, through innumerable etymological sources."

In historical records, down to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, multiplied prohibitions are found against "Baal-fires," which the people were so much disposed to kindle.

Mr. Dalyell asserts, that the festival of this divinity was commemorated in his country "until the latest date;" and he adds, "Should it have been ever truly interrupted, the citizens of the metropolis seem willing to promote its revival in recollection, by ascending a neighbouring hill (Arthur's Seat) in troops, on the 1st of May, to witness the glorious spectacle of sunrise from the sea."—*Anderson's Discourses.*

Note C.—Page 31.

With regard to the above incident in Elijah's history, we have adopted that interpretation of it which is given by our translators of the Bible, and believe that the Tishbite was actually supported, at the brook Cherith, by the means and in the manner described; namely, that, by the Lord's command, "the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook." (1 Kings xvii. 6.)

But as a different view of the subject has been taken by some commentators of high authority, it may be as well to consider the opinions which they have advanced, and their reasons for so doing.

It has been urged that the meaning of the word עֹרְבִים (*orebim*), which

is here translated "ravens," is not confined to that signification; but may denote either merchants, or Arabians, or the inhabitants of a place called Arabo, or Orbo.

In support of the first of these interpretations, reference has been made to Ezekiel xxvii. 27, where these words occur, עֹרְבֵי מַעֲרָבֶךָ—*i. e., qui negotiantur negotia tua*, or, as in our version, "the occupiers of thy merchandise;" but to this Bochart replies, in his *Hierozoicon*, lib. ii., cap. xiii., p. 214, that, although the above is a correct translation of the passage in question, yet the word עֹרְבִים taken by itself, is nowhere found to signify merchants.

And certain it is that in all the other authorized passages of the authorized version of the Old Testament, wherever the word "raven," or "ravens," occurs, it will be found expressed in the original by עֹרֵב or עֹרְבִים and by none other. (Gen. viii. 7; Lev. xi. 15; Deut. xiv. 14; Job xxxviii. 41; Psalm cxlvii. 9; Prov. xxx. 17; Canticles v. 11; Isai. xxxiv. 11.)

Why then should a different meaning be attached to it in the present instance, more especially as our version of the word has precisely the same signification given to it by Josephus, by the Chaldee Paraphrase, the Syriac, Septuagint, and Vulgate translations? The Arabic version is the only one which renders it differently.

With regard to the second interpretation mentioned, namely, that it denotes Arabians, it will be sufficient to observe, with Bochart, that this opinion assumes as a matter of fact, that the Arabians dwelt in, or occasionally travelled through, that region; which is contrary to all received opinion upon the subject. Beside which, Arabians are called in Hebrew, not עֹרְבִים *Orebim*, but עֲרַבִּים *Arbim*.

The third interpretation, namely, that it denotes the inhabitants of a place called Arabo, or Orbo, is derived from the *Bereschith Rabba*, sect. xxxiii., fol. 207, where it is described as being in the borders of Bethshan; but to this Bochart again replies, by saying, that no city of that name is known near Jordan: and Reland observes further, that if there had been a region or city of that name, its inhabitants would have been called, according to the analogy of the Hebrew language, not Orebim, but Orbonites, just as Shilonite is applied to an inhabitant of Shiloh, (1 Kings xi. 29,) and Gilonite to a native of Giloh. (2 Sam. xv. 12.) (Relandi *Palæstina Illustrata*, tom. ii., p. 913.)

The word *orebim*, moreover, has been supposed by Herman van der Hardt, to mean the inhabitants of Oreb, mentioned in Judges vii. 25; Psalm lxxxiii. 11; and Isai. x. 26; an opinion which Reland has fully discussed in his admirable work already referred to, and most completely refuted, by showing, first, that Oreb, where Gideon overthrew the two Princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeb, was not a city, but merely a rock; and, secondly, that it was on the opposite side of the Jordan to that traversed by the brook Cherith. (Judges viii. 4.) (Reland, *ut supra*, pp. 914, 916.)

Independently, however, of the above considerations, there is another very great difficulty in the way of adopting the opinion that Elijah owed his support to the supplies furnished him by merchants or any other people; and that is, the opportunity which it would have afforded to Ahab of discovering the place of his abode. We learn from the sacred narrative, that there was no nation or kingdom whither he had not sent to seek the Prophet: "and when they said, he was not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found him not." (1 Kings xviii. 10.) If

then, under these circumstances, there had been persons dwelling so near to Samaria, who visited Elijah, not occasionally, but daily, who "brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening," it seems impossible that they could have escaped the knowledge, or eluded the search, of the King of Israel. Added to which, if he received food from the hands of men, might he not, as Reland observes, have received water from the same hands, and so have remained undisturbed in his retreat? Yet we are told, that as soon as the brook Cherith dried up, he was commanded to leave that place and repair to Zarephath.

We cannot, therefore, see any good reason why a departure should be made from the words of our authorized version, or any other interpretation sought after than that which is plainly set forth there. We are not called upon, be it remembered, to explain the mode in which the miracle in question was accomplished; for this would be to make God's work dependent on man's weakness. The vain attempts, in fact, which have been made to explain it, have contributed, in no small degree, to strengthen the convictions of those who disbelieve the miracle; and, because some have advanced fanciful and absurd hypotheses respecting it, others have argued, from the very absurdity of these, against the correctness of the translation itself, and the matter of fact which it relates. (See Hales's "Analysis of Sacred Chronology," vol. ii., p. 386.) Let but the simple record of the truth be received with singleness of mind, and we shall avoid both these errors: we shall feel the value of that sound principle of scriptural interpretation, which is so justly enforced by an excellent French writer, in his commentary on this very subject:—"Lorsqu'un texte de l'Ecriture est clair, et qu'il ne renferme rien d'absurde, ni d'indigne de Dieu, il ne faut pas s'éloigner du sens qui se présente d'abord, pour en chercher un autre par des conjectures plus subtiles que solides, et cela dans la vue de ne pas admettre un miracle que l'on croit être produit sans nécessité." (M. Saurin.)

There is only one more objection worthy of notice, which pretends to urge, that, as ravens were among those animals which the law of Moses had pronounced to be unclean, so they were unfit to be the instruments of Elijah's sustenance. But surely we cannot for a moment admit this objection to be valid, when we remember that He who ordained the law could at any time dispense with or suspend its sanctions, (as we know was done in the case of David, to which our Lord refers in Luke vi. 4, and, therefore, "what God hath cleansed," let no man call "common or unclean."

We have dwelt longer upon this subject than many will think necessary, from a conviction that there exists, in the present day, a great desire to bring down the mysterious records of Scripture to a level below their proper grandeur, and to follow the example of those writers of the German school of divinity, who explain away many of the supernatural works of God and Christ, by a reference to the ordinary modes of operation in daily life. It is a principle of interpretation always likely to gain admirers, because it is flattering to our pride. For this reason we should guard against it with the greater vigilance, and strive to conquer "the sturdy doubts and boisterous objections" wherewith the unhappiness of our knowledge too nearly acquainteth us; not in a martial posture, but on our knees. "For our endeavours," saith the author of the *Religio Medici*, "are not only to combat with doubts; but always to dispute with the devil, and the villany of that spirit takes a hint of infidelity from our studies, and by demonstrating a naturality in one way, makes us mistrust a miracle in another. Thus having perused the *archidoxes*, and read the secret sympathies of things, he would dissuade my belief from the miracle

of the brasen serpent, make me conceit that image worked by sympathy, and was but an Egyptian trick to cure their diseases without a miracle. Again, having seen some experiments of bitumen, and having read far more of naphtha, he whispered to my curiosity the fire of the altar might be natural, and bade me mistrust a miracle in Elias, when he entrenched the altar round with water; for that inflammable substance yields not easily unto water, but flames in the arms of its antagonist. And thus would he inveigle my belief to think, that the combustion of Sodom might be natural, and that there was an asphaltic and bituminous nature in that lake, before the fire of Gomorrha. I know that manna is now plentifully gathered in Calabria; and Josephus tells me in his days it was as plentiful in Arabia: the devil therefore made me the *quære*,—Where was then the miracle in the days of Moses? The Israelites saw but that in his time, the natives of those countries behold them in ours. Thus the devil played at chess with me, and, yielding a pawn, thought to gain a Queen of me; taking advantage of my honest endeavours, and whilst I laboured to raise the structure of my reason, he strived to undermine the edifice of my faith." (Sir Thomas Brown's *Religio Medici*, p. 11, fol. ed.)

Note D.—Page 37.

The literal meaning of the word "Baalzebub" is, "The Lord of a fly;" and hence the Septuagint renders the passage, as if the fly were worshipped as a god by the inhabitants of Ekron, which interpretation is also adopted by Flavius Josephus and Gregory Nazianzen. Some have thought that as flies were supposed to infest idolatrous temples, being attracted thither by the flesh of the victims slain there, but were not to be seen in the temple of the true God at Jerusalem, therefore the word "Baalzebub" was applied by the Jews as a term of derision to the idol of Ekron. But Selden is of opinion that the title was invented by the Ekronites themselves, and that it is unreasonable to suppose that Ahaziah would apply a contemptuous title to the god from whom he was about to seek the means of recovery from sickness. In corroboration of this opinion, Selden shows that Jupiter and Hercules were worshipped among the Europeans under titles of similar import to that of "Baalzebub." Thus the Arcadians offered up yearly sacrifices to propitiate τον Μυιαγρον; and the Eleans, in the same manner, honoured Jupiter, Απομυιος. Hercules was worshipped by the Trachinians under the title of Κυρνοπιων; because he was supposed to drive away the κορνοπες, a species of fly or locust; and by the Erythræans he was called Ιποκτονος, from killing the insects that were injurious to the vines; and in like manner Apollo was entitled, Μυοκτονος. None of these titles were considered as terms of ridicule or reproach; neither can that of "Baalzebub" be so regarded. The name and worship of this divinity seem, in after-ages, to have extended to Africa; for Pliny writes, in Hist. x., cap. xxviii., that the Cyrenians invoke the god Achor, whenever a multitude of flies brings a pestilence upon them; and that they perish as soon as sacrifices are performed to that divinity. The name of "Baalzebub" is applied in the New Testament to "the prince of devils;" but the word is there found with some difference in its termination, Βεελζεβουλ, "Beelzebul," which reading is followed by Chrysostom, and most of the ancient fathers; and Prudentius, in the hymn Περι Στεφανων, to Vincentius the martyr thus writes,—

"Sed Beelzebulis callida
Commenta Christus destruit."

This change in the termination of the word was most probably made for the sake of casting a reproach upon the idol, as "Beelz*ebul*" has a meaning even more contemptuous than "Baalz*ebub*." Several instances are to be met with of similar changes; for example, the name of "Barchochebas," (that is, "son of a star,") the false Messiah, in the reign of Adrian, was changed to that of "Barchozibas," (that is, "son of a lie.") Thus, likewise, in the Old Testament, we find that the Mount of Olives, after it had been polluted by the high places which Solomon built for the Moabitish and Zidonian idols, was called "the Mount of Corruption." No reason has been discovered why the name of "Baalzebub" should have been applied to denote "the prince of devils;" and Selden himself confesses that he can offer no hypothesis in explanation of it: "Ob quam rem ad principem dæmoniorum denotandum usurpatur Beelzebub, fateor cum Origine, me omnino latere." (Anderson.) Dr. A. Clarke humorously observes, that "Baalzebub became *a very respectable* devil, and was supposed to have great power and influence."—*Comment. in loco.*

CHAPTER IV.

SECT. I. *State of Israel—Jehoiada—Reign of Joash—Its disastrous Circumstances—Athaliah, her profane and profligate Conduct—Preservation of Joash—His Proclamation—Death of Athaliah—And of Jehoiada—General Apostasy—Zechariah—His Fidelity and Death—Awful Retribution—Death of Joash—Supposed allusion of our Saviour to this Event—The Conjecture confirmed—Discrepancy in the Name of the Priest.* SECT. II. *Isaiah—His Birth and Parentage—His Sons—Burden of his Prophecy—His Wife—His Costume—Which was symbolical—Period of his Commission—Character of his Ministry—Uzziah—His Character and warlike Movements—General Profligacy of the People—Presumption and Punishment of the King—Jotham—Ahaz—His fearful Idolatry—And political Troubles—The Faithfulness of Isaiah—Early Career of Hezekiah—Worship of God restored—Manasseh, his idolatrous Conduct—Isaiah put to Death—Remarks on the Punishment of the Saw.* SECT. III. *Amon—Short Reign—Josiah—Idols destroyed—His Death—Jehoahaz—His Idolatry—Is exiled by the King of Egypt—Jehoiakim—Is a gross Idolater—Experiences severe Judgments—Jeremiah—Who is placed in the Stocks—And threatened with Death—Jehoiakim is besieged by Nebuchadnezzar, and carried captive, with many others, to Babylon—Jehoiakim is restored—Persecution of Jeremiah—Blasphemy of the King—Urijah—His Fidelity—His Life is threatened—He flees into Egypt—Is seized and brought back to Jerusalem—And is slain—Jehoiakim throws off the Assyrian Yoke—His miserable Death.*

SECTION I.—THE MARTYRDOM OF ZACHARIAH, SON OF JEHOIADA.

THE condition of Israel previous to and during the time that Jehoiada the Priest flourished, was truly deplorable. The revolt of the ten tribes had taken place, which left to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; and thus gave rise to the kingdom of Judah, otherwise called the Jews, as distinguished from that of Ephraim. As if to mark the displeasure of God at the schismatical proceedings of the ten tribes, and to render more conspicuous his favour toward the dynasty of David, the former

speedily declined; and, under a succession of unprincipled, idolatrous, and impious governors, became weak through internal anarchy and broils, and were actually despised by those with whom they were surrounded; whereas the latter, being blessed with numerous Princes of piety and ability, enjoyed internally a large measure of tranquillity, and rose to universal eminence and respect. One circumstance equally affected both kingdoms; namely, that God now withdrew the manifestation of his Spirit from the supreme Ruler in Israel; which gift, either in the way of prophecy, or some other form, had hitherto been a remarkable token of his presence among them. Whether its withdrawal was on account of the schism, is not declared; but the fact itself is undeniable. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, the heads of Israel during the patriarchal period, were endowed with it; after the Exodus it was enjoyed, not only by Moses, but by all the Princes who formed the great council of the nation. Of the judges it is mentioned as given in the instance of every one whose deeds are recorded,—Joshua, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, and Samuel; and, finally, to the three Kings, Saul, David, and Solomon, who ruled over the nation in its integrity; but no sooner is it dissevered, through intestine jealousy and strife, than the Holy Spirit is withheld in general from the Princes, and confined to the Prophets, who both previously and afterwards were from time to time raised up in Israel.*

Such were the circumstances in which the chosen seed were placed when Jehoiada the Priest, and the father of Zachariah, began his protracted and eventful life; commencing with the close of the reign of Solomon, and terminating in that of Joash. He had probably witnessed the decline of Solomon's glory, and bitterly lamented its cause. He saw the temples which were dedicated to false and abominable deities, some of which were erected in the very front of the house of Jehovah in which he had his residence; so that from his cradle this great and good man, and future restorer of the worship of the true God, endured the sight of idolatry, and his country bleeding beneath its baneful consequences. He witnessed the unhappy and disastrous rupture between Israel and Judah, and the dreadful doom of Jerusalem in its capture by Shishak, King of Egypt, and the plunder of the temple. Scarcely had this juvenile Priest arrived at manhood, and been called to take an active part in the temple service, than he witnessed another spoliation of its treasures, with which Asa bribed the Syrian King. The reign of Jehoshaphat, which lasted through twenty years of the best part of his life, brightened his hopes, and administered to his comfort. He rejoiced in the sight of the worship of the living God being restored, Jerusalem purged of her abominations, and all Judah standing before the Lord with their little ones, their wives, and their children. This day, so bright and cheering, was not without a cloud: Jehoshaphat inconsiderately allowed his son and successor to marry Athaliah, a daughter of the idolatrous house of Ahab. Idolatry, in its most debasing forms, was ere long established; and, although many followed his example, the more respectable part of the community disapproved of his conduct,

* Brooks's History of the Hebrew Nation, p. 250. Seeley. London.

and adhered to the true faith: nevertheless the worship of Baal was the religion of the palace and its dependents.

The cloud which had obscured the brilliancy of Jehoiada's prospect f happiness, soon covered the land. The rod was near. The Heathen around were wise enough to know that the power and strength of the danger were suspended on Israel's obedience to Jehovah. The Edomites revolted, and came against Jehoram. Then Libnah raised the standard of rebellion; and, subsequently, the Philistines, united with the tribes of Arabia, invaded the land, captured Jerusalem, and carried off the treasures, wives, and part of the family of the King.

On the death of Jehoram, Ahaziah ascended the throne, and within a few months was slain by the desolating and God-avenging hand of Jehu. At the decease of Ahaziah, his mother, Athaliah, who was equally as profane and profligate as Jezebel, and even more ambitious, conceived the horrid project of murdering all the branches of the royal family, and of seizing the reins of government. This bloody scheme succeeded, with the exception of Joash, an infant child of her own son Ahaziah, who was concealed by his aunt, a woman of a better spirit, the daughter of Jehoram, whom Jehoiada the High Priest had married.

It is at this last point that Jehoiada first appears on the page of Jewish history; who, being related by marriage to the royal family, was in a situation which enabled him to take an active part in the affairs of his country. The Queen, having ascended the throne, immediately established the worship of Baal throughout her dominions; she closed the temple of Jehovah, having previously stripped it of its splendid ornaments and utensils, which she bestowed upon Baal; and for a period of six years wallowed in all the excesses of libertinism and idolatry. Thus was the Most High abandoned and despised; and as in after-years the servant did not fare better than his master, so did it prove in the case before us. "Many, doubtless, were the mockings and revilings which he underwent, and hopeless must have appeared the task of reclaiming his countrymen. Yet another agent was working with him, which is a much more effectual Preacher than the voice of persuasion. The sword and chains of the intolerable tyranny of the idolatrous Athaliah were the Preachers which effectually prepared their hearts in the end to listen to him. It was soon made to appear that if the spirit of Jezebel had set itself on the throne in Athaliah, the spirit of Elijah was not wanting at its post of resistance in the sanctuary in Jehoiada. The royal babe was brought up secretly in the most retired part of the enclosure of the temple, which was a hiding-place the more secure, from the utter neglect into which the prevalence of idolatry had thrown it. The Queen and her party never entered it for worship; and none but well-wishers to the house of David were likely to be met with there." *

After the expiration of seven years the High Priest, beholding the desolated condition of the country, and the distress and dissatisfaction of the people, who sighed for the rule of the sons of David while suf-

* Evans's Scripture Biography.

fering under the whip of scorpions wielded by the abandoned Queen, —having concerted measures with certain chief men and officers for placing upon the throne the child Joash, summoned his friends upon an appointed day to the temple, an act which his sacerdotal office enabled him to perform without suspicion. To this company he introduced the long-lost descendant of the house of David, who was forthwith acknowledged as King, and measures were taken to accomplish his restoration. He was subsequently crowned and anointed. On hearing the acclamations, the Queen hastened to the temple; but at the command of Jehoiada she was dragged from thence, and led to execution.

Jehoiada lived a few years after this event, and, on account of his memorable services, he was buried with great honour in the tomb of their Kings. But no sooner was he consigned to the mansion of the dead, than a fearful apostasy again overspread the land; the chief nobles of Judah left the house of God, and served groves and idols, and Joash hearkened unto them. The Almighty, in the plenitude of his long-suffering, withheld the punishment they justly merited, and sent his Prophets to warn them of the danger to which they were exposing themselves, and to bring them back to himself; but they turned a deaf ear to his reproof. At length the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada. He went to the temple, which was again polluted by the idolatrous practices of the people, and, standing on the steps of the court of the Priests, so as to be above the people in the outer court, he opened to them his commission, and cried, "Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandment of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you." (2 Chron. xxiv. 20.) Confounded at this just and bitter rebuke, the King and his nobles were enraged beyond measure; and the multitude, gladly obeying the orders of their unthankful King, rushed upon him, and pursuing him as he retreated to the altar of burnt-offerings, there, at that holy seat of mercy and atonement, and between it and the temple, they stoned and slew him. The Prophet with his dying breath continued the words of his commission: "The Lord look upon it, and require it." "Thus Joash the King remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son." The dying words of the martyred Priest were, ere long, fulfilled. Before the year expired in which that diabolical deed was perpetrated, a small band of Syrians surprised Jerusalem, and overran the country, making havoc more especially of the Princes and chief men, ransacking their palaces, and sending away the spoil to Damascus. The subjects of Joash had no power to resist, for God was not with them; and his own servants, during the panic which prevailed, conspired against his life, and murdered him in his bed. The inspired writer declares that this came upon him "for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the Priest." (2 Chron. xxiv. 25.)

It is generally supposed, and not without great appearance of probability, that our Lord refers to the martyrdom of this holy man, (Matt. xxiii. 35,) whom he calls "Zacharias, son of Barachias."

"That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth," meaning, doubtless, the land of Judea, which interpretation the word frequently sustains; and implying, the national punishment of all the innocent blood which had been shed in the land shall speedily come upon you, "from the blood of Abel the just," the first Prophet and Preacher of righteousness, (Heb. xi. 4; 2 Peter ii. 5,) "unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."

Some have objected to the truth of this supposition, and assert that it was some other individual of the same name to whom allusion was made. Let it, however, be observed, that this Zechariah is the only one of that name of whom mention is made in Scripture, as having fallen a victim to his fidelity in declaring the truth. He, when "he died, said, The Lord look upon it, and require it;" so that both cases mentioned, that of Abel, and that of Zecharias, are those of men persecuted to death for righteousness' sake, and whose deaths were expressly connected with the awful circumstance, a cry to heaven for righteous retribution. The conjectures of commentators, as to the other persons of this name, are without foundation, that especially which would refer it prophetically to a Jew called Zecharias, who was slain by the Jewish zealots in the temple a little before the destruction of Jerusalem; an irrelevant fact which has been singled out under the false assumption that our Lord's words in Matt. xxiii. 35, mean, that the Jews of that generation were to be held guilty of the blood of all the righteous men, from Abel downwards, to the last righteous blood shed by the Jews before their city was destroyed. This is not only a monstrous supposition, but plainly contrary to that principle of the divine government which is so expressly laid down in the words, "Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." Besides, that the Jews should be held particularly responsible for the blood of Abel, when they stood in no nearer relation to him than the persecutors of good men of any other nation, cannot be conceived; and that they should be chargeable with even the murder of those Prophets whom their fathers put to death, when our Lord himself declares, that they disavowed the deeds of their ancestors in this respect, although they would act as to him and his disciples in a similar manner, is as little reconcilable with the known equity of the divine proceedings. The interpretations formed upon this view of the meaning of our Lord's words, create, therefore, a difficulty which does not exist. Their meaning is, that the vengeance of all the righteous blood shed upon earth, from Abel to Zecharias, should come upon that generation; that is, a punishment equal to the accumulated woes brought upon men for the crime of rejecting the truth, and persecuting its righteous Preachers in all these ages, should be heaped upon the devoted heads of the Jews. And this was an act of manifest justice, since they put one, infinitely greater than all the Prophets, to death, even the Messiah himself; and in opposition to stronger evidences of a divine mission than any former Prophets had given, wreaked their persecuting hate both upon him and his disci-

ples. The punishments brought upon the Jews bear a remarkable correspondence to those inflicted both upon the murderer of Abel, and upon those of Zecharias. The Jews have borne, ever since the subversion of their nation by the Romans, the curse of Cain; a "mark" has been set upon them; and "fugitives" and "vagabonds" have they been in the earth. And as in consequence of the murder of Zechariah, at the command of Joash, "the host of Syria came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the Princes of the people from among the people," so it was, only in a severer degree, in the Roman invasion. And with respect to other Prophets, because "they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy,—therefore he brought upon them the King of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the King, and of his Princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped of the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia." (2 Chron. xxxvi. 16—20.) This, too, was realized with aggravated severity, and this terrible type of vengeance was accomplished in an accumulation of similar woes, when the prophetic words of our Lord, as related by Matthew, were fully accomplished. These especially were the calamities which Christ had in view when he adds, "Verily I say unto you, that all these things shall come upon this generation." But these terrible denunciations proceeded from no resentment, no indignant feelings at the wrongs he himself had endured: they were wrung from this lover of his country, this lover of the souls of his own people, by the stern necessity of reluctant justice; and they were uttered amidst the heavings of compassion and sorrow.*

The discrepancy in the name of the Priest under consideration has also tended to confirm the doubts of many with regard to the person alluded to by our Lord. By the Old-Testament writers he is described as Zechariah, son of Jehoiada; our Saviour spake of the martyr as the son of Barachias. Hesitation and doubt will be removed, when we consider, 1. That double names were frequent among the Jews; and sometimes the individual was called by one, and sometimes by the other. Compare 1 Sam. ix. 1, with 1 Chron. viii. 33, where it appears that the father of Kish had two names, Abiel and Ner. Matthew is called Levi. (Matt. ix. 9; Mark ii. 14.) Peter was called Simon, and Lebbeus was also called Thaddeus. (Matt. x. 2, 3.) 2. Jerome assures us, that in the Gospel of the Nazarenes it is written Jehoiada instead of Barachiah. And, 3.

* Watson's Exposition *in loco*.

Jehoiada and Barachiah possess the same meaning, literally signifying "the praise or blessing of Jehovah." Zechariah is the last Prophet whose mal-treatment and consequent death is recorded in the canonical books of the Jewish Scriptures.

SECTION II.—THE MARTYRDOM OF ISAIAH.

COMPARATIVELY little is known of the early life and history of the Prophet Isaiah. His father's name was Amoz, and hence several of the authorities of the primitive church confound him with the Prophet Amos, because they were unacquainted with Hebrew, and in Greek the names are spelt alike. The opinion of the Rabbins, that Isaiah was a brother of King Amaziah, rests also on a mere etymological combination. Isaiah resided at Jerusalem, not far from the temple. We learn, also, from the seventh and eighth chapters of the book that bears his name, that he was married. Two of his sons are mentioned, Shear-jashul, and Maher-shalal-hash-baz. These significant names which he gave to his sons prove how much Isaiah lived in his vocation. He did not consider his children to belong merely to himself, but rendered them living admonitions to the people. In their names were contained the two chief points of his prophetic utterances: one called to mind the severe and inevitable judgment wherewith the Lord was about to visit the world, and especially his people: the other, which signifies "the remnant shall return," pointed out the mercy with which the Lord would receive the elect; and with which, in the midst of apparent destruction, he would take care to preserve his people and his kingdom. Isaiah calls his wife, נביאה—"Prophetess." This indicates that his marriage life was not in opposition to his calling; and also, that it not only went along and harmonized with it, but was intimately interwoven with it. This name cannot mean the wife of a Prophet, but indicates that the Prophetess of Isaiah had a prophetic gift, like Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah. The appellation given denotes the genuineness of their conjugal relation. Even the dress of the Prophet was subservient to his office. He wore a garment of hair, or sackcloth. (Isai. xx. 2.) This seems, also, to have been the costume of Elijah, (2 Kings i. 8,) and it was the dress of John the Baptist. (Matt. iii. 4.) Hairy sackcloth is in the Bible the symbol of repentance. (1 Kings xxi. 27; Jonah iii. 8.) This costume of the Prophets was a *sermo propheticus realis*, "a prophetic preaching by fact." The Prophet came forward in the form of personified repentance. What he did, exhibited to the people what they should do. Before he opened his lips, his external appearance proclaimed Μετανοειτε, "Repent."*

Isaiah flourished at a period which, of all others, was most suited to the purposes of the delivery of prophecy. The kingdoms of Israel and of Judah had recovered much of their ancient greatness; the former under the second Jeroboam, the latter under Uzziah. The people generally were greatly corrupt, and their national welfare depended, in a considerable degree, on the individual who occupied

* Kitto's Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature, vol. ii., pp. 35, 36.

the throne. If a feeble or wicked Monarch swayed the sceptre, the country fell into desolation and ruin; and, on the contrary, when God was acknowledged, and his laws obeyed, prosperity and happiness prevailed. This is abundantly exemplified in the history and death of the Prophets.

From among a company of youths, trained to be the vessels of God's prophetic spirit, Isaiah was chosen, and received his commission at the close of the long and golden reign of Uzziah. The inauguration of the Prophet was one of thrilling interest and powerful sublimity. (Isai. vi. 1, &c.) In the vision with which the man of God was favoured, the incurable corruption of the people, the gross depravity of the heart, and their utter disregard of spiritual truth, were faithfully and significantly placed before him. Nevertheless, encouraged by the presence and promise of the Almighty, he entered upon his arduous undertaking. His was indeed a painful and a thankless office. The prosperous reign of Uzziah unfitted the people for taking an honest and faithful view of their own circumstances. They cried "Peace," when God had not spoken peace. They imagined themselves "rich, and increased with goods, and having need of nothing;" and knew not that they were "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." (Rev. iii. 17.) So that when the Prophet opened his mournful message, and in a deeply melancholy strain described those iniquities of his countrymen, which were hastening upon them the judgment of the Most High, their forgetfulness of God, their hypocrisy, extortion, and murder, he was compelled to exclaim, "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walked in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts." (Isai. lxv. 2.)

The abundance of temporal benefits which the people enjoyed during the present protracted reign, prepared the way for a fearful amount of immorality and crime, which ultimately led to the martyrdom of Isaiah. Uzziah was, with regard to international prosperity, highly favoured. He rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, and added greatly to the strength and durability of the strongholds of the country.* His warlike movements against the Philistines and some of the Arabian tribes, were successful. He constructed numerous magazines, arsenals, and military engines; laid the foundations of new cities, which rose into importance and wealth during his life-time. After he had thus provided for the protection and security of the land, his attention was directed to its agriculture. He encouraged the multiplication of extensive flocks and herds, for the safety of which he caused to be erected large folds, well fortified with towers. The growth of the vine was cultivated on a wide scale, and other important branches of husbandry were promoted.

* It is worthy of record, that Uzziah is said to have been the inventor of the Ballistæ and Catapultæ, afterwards adopted by the Greeks and Romans. (See Calmet.) Engines were certainly constructed by him, for discharging stones and arrows, and attributed to the invention of his "cunning men." (2 Chron. xxvi. 15.) The foundation of Rome is, by some writers, placed in his reign; others assign to it the succeeding one, varying from B.C. 753 to 748. The era of the Greek Olympiads likewise commenced in his reign, namely, B.C. 777. (Hist. of the Heb. Nation).

When Jeshurun waxed fat, he kicked. Worldly prosperity is, at all times, an unfriendly soil to the growth of piety. The prophetic writings of Joel, Isaiah, and Micah, abound with intimations that the general well-being of the country, and especially the unlimited cultivation of the grape, had induced a fearful extent of drunkenness and impiety. Parents were notorious for selling their offspring for wine. The women dressed themselves in fantastic apparel, and indulged in wantonness and frivolity. The rich were greedy in the pursuit of gain, adding field to field, irrespective of the rights, civil and patrimonial, of those with whom they were surrounded. The "abomination" of deceitful weights and balances was common among the merchants; and the bench of justice was polluted by flagrant acts of unrighteousness and oppression. The religion of the people, as taught by Jehovah himself, was undermined, and idolatry became rampant; and then, as if to fill the measure of his iniquity, Uzziah aspired to the office of Priest as well as King; and, notwithstanding the expostulations and opposition of Azariah, the chief officer, the Monarch advanced to the altar of incense, where in judgment he was met by the Lord of the temple, struck with leprosy, which immediately began to appear, was hurriedly expelled from the precincts of the sacred edifice, and, being by this judgment rendered politically dead, he withdrew from a palace to a separate house, where he dwelt until his death. "His heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God." (1 Chron. xxvi. 16.)

Uzziah was succeeded by Jotham, of whose reign but little is recorded, save, that he "became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God." Ahaz, the following King, furnished a striking contrast. He placed before him the Princes of Ephraim, whom he endeavoured to imitate; Baal was introduced, sacrifices were offered in the high places, images were erected, and the Monarch not only gave himself up to every species of the most vile idolatry, but actually offered several of his own children at the shrine of Moloch. All governments which have been founded on false worship, or, in the spirit of a compromising apostasy, have bowed the knee to the man of sin, have been pusillanimous and weak. Hence the feeble and crippled administration of Ahaz invited the inroads of his envious and rapacious neighbours, the evil consequences of which were averted through the timely intercession of the Prophet, who speedily beheld the King and people return to their idolatrous practices, as soon as their deliverance from the Syrians had been achieved.

"Yet one hearer Isaiah had obtained, who, as a boy of the tender age of ten years, was standing by the side of his royal father, when the Prophet appeared before him with his message of deliverance and visitation. The sight and the words of the holy man sank deep into the mind of the youth; and if he had not formerly, he did then, conceive serious and lasting impressions of holy thought and feeling. He had no sooner mounted the throne, than the seed sown by the Prophet disclosed its fruit in Hezekiah; and we may faintly enter into the joy of Isaiah's heart, when the juvenile King set about the holy duty of restoring the worship of the Lord. Doubtless, God's Prophet

lent all his help and encouragement, when the long-closed doors of the temple were opened once more, the destroyed vessels were replaced, the intermitted sacrifices were renewed, and the Passover, that solemn allegiance to the Lord, was celebrated. It was, indeed, a joyous sight; but not even the mind of the politician, still less of the Prophet, could be cheated by it out of its well-founded despondency. For what did this same enthusiastic multitude, when Ahaz defiled the temple with idols, mutilated its vessels, filled Jerusalem with idolatrous altars, and was seconded by the High Priest? It did as every corrupt populace does. In such, there is a prevailing laxity of principle, and every one is ready, for the sake of selfish indulgence, or from a base love of popularity, or from fear of ill-will, singularity, or ridicule, to acquiesce with an active leader or leading party, whether for right or for wrong. Thus independence of mind is gone, fashion becomes omnipotent, and all bow before the tyranny of the spirit of the times. From what other cause could Judah, under Ahaz, repudiate the Lord, under Hezekiah return to him, under Manasseh reject him, under Josiah restore him, under Zedekiah reject him again? So little comfort was this transitory burst of light likely to bring to Isaiah!" *

There is, perhaps, nothing that is so calculated to test the nature of that religion which is professed by the multitude, when godliness is patronised by the throne, as the withdrawal of that influence, and when an evil ruler grasps the sceptre of power and directs the realm. The true character of Judah's faith was exhibited on the death of Hezekiah: Manasseh, a lad of but twelve years of age, was his successor, who, with reckless and indecent haste, plunged into idolatry; he repaired the high-places which had been thrown down, established again the altars of Baal, offered his son to Moloch, and introduced images and heathen altars, even into the courts and sanctuary of the house of God. The unprincipled and profligate inhabitants of Judah very speedily followed in the wake of their Monarch, and ere long the whole land presented the appearance of one large temple, dedicated to the service and worship of deities, whose religion consisted in acts which were awfully impure, licentious, and diabolic. At this fearful result, none can be surprised, when the demoralized condition of the priesthood, as described by Isaiah, is taken into consideration, who represents them as being sensual, drunken and slothful, covetous and base: The "watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand; they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter." (Isai. lvi. 10, 11.) Thus did Manasseh proceed in his headlong career of determined apostasy and crime: not satisfied with exhibiting to his subjects an awful example of idolatry and sensuality, he became tyrannical and cruel, so as to drench Jerusalem with the blood of those whom he had arbitrarily put to death.

Among the number of these primitive martyrs, we have to include

* Evans's Scripture Biography. Second series, p. 150.

the venerable Prophet. Isaiah was not long ere he followed his royal master. Manasseh, who spared not the Prophets, was not likely to exercise leniency towards Isaiah, inasmuch as desperate wickedness cannot endure the slightest hint of rebuke. The Prophet before us would be obnoxious beyond all the rest, from the influence which he was enabled legitimately to exercise over Hezekiah, the late Monarch, from his great reputation as the Prophet of God, and also from the unflinching boldness of his character and conduct. Tradition declares that Isaiah suffered death at the hand of Manasseh, by being sawn asunder with a wooden saw.*

SECTION III.—THE MARTYRDOM OF URIJAH.

Upon the death of Manasseh, the idolatrous Amon ascended the throne of Judah. His career was but short; a conspiracy among his own servants sent him to sleep with his fathers, in the second year of his reign. At the tender age of eight years, Josiah ascended the throne. He was richly endued with the grace of God, and,

* The infliction of death by the saw was known among the Hebrews. We imagine this punishment came originally from the Persians, or the Chaldeans. We are assured that it is not unknown among the Switzers, and that they practised it not many years ago on one of their countrymen, guilty of a great crime, in the plain of Grenelle, near Paris. They put him into a kind of coffin, and sawed him at length, beginning at his head, as a piece of wood is sawn. Parisatis, King of Persia, caused Roxana to be sawn in two alive. (Ctesia in Persia.) Valerius Maximus says, that the Thracians sometimes subjected living men to this torture. The laws of the twelve tables which the Romans had borrowed from the Greeks, condemned certain crimes to the punishment of the saw. But the execution of it was so rare, as Aulus Gellius says, (*Noct. Att.*, lib. xii., cap. 2,) that none remembered to have seen it performed. Herodotus (lib. vi.) relates, that Sabacus, King of Egypt, received an order in a dream, to cut in two all the Priests of Egypt. Caius Caligula, the Emperor, often condemned people of condition to be sawn in two through the middle; *aut medios serrâ dissecuit.* St. Paul, speaking of the calamities suffered by saints of the Old Testament, says, some were "sawn asunder." (Heb. xi. 37.) *Επριωθησαν, Serrâ secti sunt;* Origen, Justin Martyr, (*Dialog. cum Tryphone,*) Jerom, (in Isa. lib. xv. *ad finem,*) the author of the poem against Marcion, printed under the name of Tertullian, and several other ancients, explained this passage of the death of Isaiah, who is said to have been murdered by King Manasseh, with a wooden saw. This circumstance of a saw of wood is perplexing; for no saws are made of wood; and, besides, a man could not be cut in two with such a saw. Our conjecture on this matter is, by supposing this saw of wood was a sledge loaded with stones and iron spikes, with which they threshed the ears of corn, to get out the grain. Or, might it not be understood more simply of a wood saw, that is, a saw for cutting wood, there being saws of several kinds, for stone, for iron, for wood? &c. Daniel also speaks of the punishment of the saw, (Hist. of Susanna, ver. 55,) "Even now the angel of God has received the sentence of God to cut thee in two." St. Matthew says, that the wicked servant shall be cut in two, and thrust among hypocrites. (Matt. xxiv. 51; Luke xii. 46.) The Old Testament alludes to this custom, when it uses the word, "to cut in two," "to divide," &c., for putting to death. (Calmet Dict., *in loco.*)

"It is a regular tradition, both among Jews and Christians, that the Prophet Isaiah reproved, and denounced the judgments of the Lord against the enormities of Manasseh; in consequence of which, this impious King caused him to be *cut asunder with a wooden saw.* Origen, Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Chrysostom, Jerom, and Augustin, have all handed down this account to us. It is said, that the pretence made use of by this wicked King, for the murder of this holy man, was an expression employed by him, (chap. vi. 1,) *I saw the Lord sitting in the throne.* Therefore, (said the impious King,) you must be put to *death;* for God hath said to Moses, (Exod. xxxiii. 20,) *No man shall see me and live.* Thus, as in numberless succeeding cases, the Scriptures of truth were perverted, to afford persecution the colour of a pretence for shedding the blood of the saints of the Most High."—*A. Clarke's Christian Martyrology.*

as soon as he had reached his twentieth year, began to assail and to remove the abuses which up to that period he had tolerated. The altars of Baal were once more broken down, and the images of every description were ground to powder, which was strewed upon the graves of those who had formerly been their worshippers; an instructive and valuable lesson to all of the impotence of the gods, in which their fathers had vainly trusted. After the death of Josiah, who was slain in the valley of Megiddo, from a wound which he received in a conflict with Pharaoh-Necho, his younger son Jehoahaz was made King by the people, who immediately displayed the iniquity of his heart, by restoring all those idolatrous practices which his pious father endeavoured to destroy. But "the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment." (Job xx. 5.) Pharaoh-Necho, returning from his expedition against the King of Assyria, surprised Jerusalem, placed Jehoahaz in chains, exiled him from the country, after having reigned the short period of three months, and placed his elder brother Eliakim, whose name he changed to Jehoiakim, on the throne.

The religious aspect was not altered by this movement. The people, who unblushingly traversed the compass in politics and religion so frequently within the space of a few years, were not prepared to offer much, if any, resistance to such flagrant departure from the path of truth and righteousness. Jehoiakim was a gross idolater, and the people were speedily led to wander from and reject God; so fickle and changing is the voice of the multitude! In the midst of this fearful apostasy, a serious famine visited the country, which, so far from being accompanied with permanent good, produced still greater hardness of heart and contempt of the Most High, as is proved in their treatment of Jeremiah the Prophet, who, taking occasion to admonish them, and to warn them of more serious judgments, was placed in the stocks; and, being a second time apprehended and imprisoned, was on the eve of being put to death, but was happily rescued from the hands of Jehoiakim by the timely intervention of Ahikam, a pious friend, who had been the Secretary of Josiah, and one of those four persons of distinction whom that Monarch sent to consult Huldah the Prophetess. (2 Kings xxii. 12—14.)

The storm which had been for several years gathering, at length burst over the guilty and oft-reproved Jehoiakim. Nebuchadnezzar with great power besieged Jerusalem, laid it waste, carried the Jewish King a captive to Babylon in fetters of brass, with a multitude of noble and honourable captives, among whom we have to enumerate the pious and highly-gifted Daniel, and his faithful and devout companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, all of whom were of the seed royal; and on account of the comeliness of their persons, and strength of intellect which they exhibited, were either educated as Magi, or trained to wait upon the Babylonian King as Pages at court.

After having promised fealty to the King of Babylon, Jehoiakim was restored to his throne, unhumbled and unimproved. The captives were retained. The Prophet of Anathoth, in consequence of faithful and unwelcome warnings, was in such constant jeopardy of life, as to

keep himself in a state of perpetual concealment. A message from the Lord, which the Prophet sent the King written on a roll of vellum, containing an invitation to repentance, with tremendous warnings of severe punishment if he refused, was cut to pieces by Jehoiakim with his penknife, and cast into the fire. (Jer. xxxvi. 23.) To destroy the sacred Scriptures, a crime which denotes the offender to have arrived at the pinnacle of impiety and presumption, and the utmost extent of rebellion against the God of truth, has of late been frequently perpetrated by infidels, apostates, and by various members of the idolatrous Church of Rome.

It was during this unhappy reign that Urijah flourished. Animated and encouraged by the fidelity and active fortitude of Jeremiah, he shunned not to declare to the ungodly race around him "the whole counsel of God." Of his personal history, we know but little: the brief account that is recorded, states that he was the son of Shemaiah of Kirjath-jearim; that he prophesied in the name of the Lord against Jerusalem, and against the land, according to all the words of Jeremiah. (Jer. xxvi. 20.) He had boldly denounced the judgments of God against the wickedness of the nation, in the presence of Jehoiakim and the Princes of his court. Incensed at this liberty, the King determined to put the Prophet to death; who, hearing of his murderous intentions, fled into Egypt. The cruel and oppressive Monarch (Jer. xxii. 17) was firm to his purpose; and, therefore, sent a troop of men, under the command of Elnathan, to seize Urijah in that country, and convey him back to Jerusalem. This was done, and Urijah, by the command of the King, was slain by the sword, and his body cast into the graves of the common people: thus, to him was refused that honourable burial with which the Prophets from time immemorial had been favoured, when the word of the Lord was recognised as true and faithful among the people of Judah.

"Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." (Prov. xi. 21.) Much time did not elapse, before Jehoiakim fell beneath the retributive dispensations of the Most High. Jeremiah had prophesied "concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah King of Judah; They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem;" (Jer. xxii. 18, 19; 2 Kings xxiii. 34—37; xxiv. 1—7; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 4—8;) and mark how literally this awful prediction met with its accomplishment. The counsel of God against him stood sure. Finding the King of Babylon elsewhere employed, and being deluded by the Egyptian party who had nestled themselves in the bosom of his court, he foolishly ventured to withhold his customary and pledged tribute; thus virtually shaking off the Chaldean yoke, contrary to the earnest and oft-repeated remonstrances of Jeremiah. In a short period, the land was invaded by the armies of Chaldea, accompanied by a vast number of their auxiliaries from the neighbouring countries, the Edomites, Moabites, and others; who were, for the most part, actuated by fierce hatred against the Jewish name and nation. Jerusalem fell

into the hands of the conqueror, or, more correctly, surrendered on terms, which the Babylonian Monarch in a short time utterly disregarded. Jehoiakim was slain;* but whether this event took place during the action, or subsequent to the surrender, is not mentioned. Suffice it to say, that those manifestations of indignity and cruelty with which he treated the righteous Urijah, "returned upon his own head." (Psalm vii. 16.) He slew the Prophet of the Most High with the sword; and with the sword of the Chaldeans God caused him to be slain. He refused the Prophet a decent burial; and God caused him "to be buried with the burial of an ass." Calmet, without hesitation, declares, that he was thrown into a common sewer, outside the walls of the city of Jerusalem. Josephus asserts, that he was "thrown before the walls, without any burial." This is one instance, among many, which will be adduced during the progress of this work, of the retributive dispensations of the Most High, descending upon those persecutors of the righteous, who have dared to "touch" the Lord's "anointed," and to "do" his "Prophets" harm. The devoted Urijah suffered martyrdom, A.M. 3395, and about 605 years anterior to the Christian era.

* The books of Kings and Chronicles are silent, as to the manner of Jehoiakim's death; but Josephus states, that he was slain by the Chaldeans: "The King of Babylon slew such as were in the flower of their age, and such as were of the greatest dignity, together with their King Jehoiakim, whom he commanded to be thrown before the walls, without any burial, and made his son Jehoiachin, King of the country and of the city; he also took the principal persons in dignity for captives, three thousand in number, and led them away to Babylon; among whom was the Prophet Ezekiel, who was then but young." (Jos. Antiq., book x., chap. 6.) That his death was violent and inglorious, is evident from the Prophet Jeremiah; a prediction which refers to the custom of adjudging the funeral-rites, according to the previous character.

CHAPTER V.

SECT. I. JERUSALEM TAKEN.—*Nebuchadnezzar—Agitated State of Jerusalem—Perilous Situation of Jeremiah—Is thrown into a Dungeon—Jerusalem is besieged—Distress of the Inhabitants—The City taken—Zedekiah slain, and the City ruined—Lamentations of Jeremiah—Bishop Lowth and Dr. South quoted—Gedaliah—Mizpeh—Death of the Prophet.*—SECT. II. THE CAPTIVITY.—*Hebrews in Babylon—The Treatment of the Captives—Character of the King of Babylon—Prediction of Isaiah—Daniel and his Companions—Dangers to which they were exposed—Change of their Names—Their moral Training—Luxury of the Babylonian Court—Their Preservation from Evil—Nebuchadnezzar's first Dream—Daniel and others sentenced to Death—The former reveals the Dream and its Interpretation—Is promoted—Nebuchadnezzar's Image—Its Dedication—Principles developed—All commanded to render Worship—Description of the Idol—The Hebrew Confessors refuse to worship—The Consequences of such a Refusal—The fiery Furnace—The Deliverance of the Jews—Nebuchadnezzar's second Dream—Its Interpretation—Effect of the Dream on Nebuchadnezzar—His Death—Evil-Merodach—His Character—Belshazzar—His Conduct—The mysterious Writing—Is explained and fulfilled—Darius—His Opinion of Daniel—Who is accused—And thrown into the Den of Lions—Mercifully preserved—Destruction of his Enemies—Death and Character of Daniel.*

SECTION I.—OF JEREMIAH.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR was the name of the Chaldean Monarch by whom Judea was conquered, and the Jews led into their seventy years' captivity. Nebo was originally the name of a Chaldean deity, supposed to be Mercury, and enters frequently into the composition of the proper names of Chaldea, as Nabopolassar, Nebuzaradan, (2 Kings xxv. 8,) Samgar-nebo, and Nebushasban. (Jer. xxxix. 3, 13.) The name Nebuchadnezzar has been commonly explained to signify "the treasure of Nebo;" but, according to others, it means "Nebo, the Prince of gods." The only notices which we have of this Monarch in the canonical writings, are to be found in the books of Kings, Chronicles, Daniel, and Ezra, and in the allusions of the Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

From the inspired records, (2 Kings xxiii. 29; 2 Chron. xxxv. 20,) we learn, that in the reign of Josiah, (B.C. 610,) Pharaoh-Necho, King of Egypt, having approached by sea the coast of Syria, applied to Josiah to be allowed to pass through his territories towards the dominions of the Assyrian Monarch, with whom he was at war. "I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war; for God commanded me to make haste." The design of the Egyptian King was to seize upon Carchemish, a strong post on the Euphrates; but Josiah, who had sworn fealty to the Babylonian Monarch, resolutely opposed his progress at Megiddo, where, being defeated and mortally wounded, Necho marched forward to Jerusalem, which subsequently became tributary to that Monarch. Hearing of this aggressive movement on the part of Necho, Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, (2 Kings xxiv. 1; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6, where his name is for

the first time introduced in the sacred history,) invaded Judah, retook Carchemish, with the territory which had been wrested from him by Necho, and reduced him to submission. This invasion took place in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, or, according to Daniel, (chap. i. 1, 2,) in the third year. In order to reconcile this apparent contradiction, it is supposed that the first year of Nebuchadnezzar fell partly in the third, and partly in the fourth, year of Jehoiakim. He was at first laden with chains, in order to be led to Babylon; but was eventually restored by Nebuchadnezzar, on condition of paying an annual tribute. The sacred vessels, however, were transferred to the idol-temple in the Assyrian capital. The fate of Jerusalem was now fast approaching. At the termination of three years, Jehoiakim renounced his fealty to Babylon, and renewed his connexion with Necho; the result of which was, that he was made prisoner, and slain. He was then succeeded by his son Jehoiachin, whose reign terminated in three months; but, brief as it was, it was nevertheless strongly marked by iniquity. He was deposed, and carried away captive by the Babylonian King, who at the same time sacked Jerusalem, and transported to his capital all the most distinguished inhabitants. Among the captives, who amounted to not less than *fifty thousand*, were Ezekiel, (Ezek. i. 1,) and Mordecai. All the golden vessels of Solomon, together with the royal treasures, were removed; and Mattaniah, the brother of Jehoiakim, placed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar, who gave him the name of Zedekiah, and bound him by an oath not to enter into alliance with Egypt. He followed in the same course of idolatry, and also foolishly rebelled against the King of Babylon; which policy the Lord in anger suffered, that he might accomplish against Judah what he had threatened.

The situation of Jeremiah had now become exceedingly unpopular and precarious. The disposition which the Jews displayed to form an alliance with Egypt, filled the Prophet with great apprehension and alarm. From that people, the Jews confidently expected protection and help against the Chaldean and Assyrian, whom they both hated and dreaded, while Jeremiah hesitated not in strong and faithful language to repudiate all such dependence, as futile and false; and hesitated not to declare, that all who submitted to the King of Babylon would thereby secure safety and peace. This conduct naturally exposed him to the imputation of traitorous designs, so that they made the departure of Jeremiah from the city, during the short respite which occurred between the arrival of Nebuchadnezzar and his re-appearance, the pretext for accusing him of deserting to the Chaldeans, and he was forthwith cast into prison. All this was the prelude of additional calamities, both to the King and to the people. Jerusalem was again invested by a besieging army. Pharaoh-Hophra, who had succeeded Necho, coming to the assistance of Zedekiah, was driven back into Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar. The inhabitants of the city were panic-stricken. Zedekiah sent to the Prophet, now immured in the dungeon, to pray for him and his people, and to inquire of the Lord, while he and the few persons of distinction who rallied around his throne, confidently expecting a favourable reply, emptied their prisons,

and emancipated those who were in bondage, slavery being an evil against which the Prophets had loudly spoken. The answer of the Most High was unpropitious; and the King, burning with rage, again condemned the Prophet to his solitary and wretched abode, and the elders, also, reduced their slaves to their former state of subjection and thraldom.

Nebuchadnezzar, flushed with victory, now determined to prosecute his plans against Jerusalem, with vigour and efficiency. Zedekiah, learning to his sorrow and chagrin the overthrow of the army on which he vainly relied, was distracted by awful misgivings of conscience, and privately sent for Jeremiah. He pledged himself that he should not again be sent to prison; but so weak and corrupt had he become, by giving himself up into the hands of his courtiers, and of foreigners who were found among them, he was so utterly helpless, that, when they demanded it, he, with great imbecility and treachery, surrendered the Prophet into their power, who again imprisoned him. In this instance he was cast into a noisome pit, or cess-pool, within the dungeon, and there left to perish; but Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian eunuch of rank, and one also of the little remnant who had embraced the faith of the one true God, again prevailed upon the unstable and vacillating King in behalf of Jeremiah; upon which he was rescued from the pit, but still kept in confinement in the court of the prison-house.*

The siege was now prosecuted with untiring energy, and the besieged were reduced to great privation and distress, on account of the failure of their provision and the appearance of disease, the natural result of want and badness of food; women even boiling their own children and devouring them, to satisfy the merciless cravings of hunger. (Lam. ii. 20; iv. 10.) Josephus says, "There came upon them also, two of the greatest calamities at the same time that Jerusalem was besieged, a famine and a pestilential distemper, and made great havoc of them; and though the Prophet Jeremiah was in prison, he did not rest, but cried out, and proclaimed aloud, and exhorted the multitude to open their gates, and admit the King of Babylon, for that if they did so, they should not be destroyed; and he foretold, that if any one stayed in the city, he should certainly perish by one of these ways,—either be consumed by the famine, or

* Josephus informs us, that Zedekiah, "that he might not be engaged in a quarrel with those rulers at such a time, by opposing what they intended, let them do with the Prophet whatsoever they would: whereupon, when the King had granted them such a permission, they presently came into the prison and took him, and let him down with a cord into a pit full of mire, that he might be suffocated and die of himself. So he stood up to the neck in the mire, which was all about him, and so continued; but there was one of the King's servants who was in esteem with him, an Ethiopian by descent, who told the King what a state the Prophet was in; and said, that his friends and his rulers had done evil in putting Jeremiah into the pit, and by that means contriving against him, that he should suffer a death more bitter than that by his bonds only. When the King heard this, he repented of his having delivered up the Prophet to the rulers, and bade the Ethiopian take thirty men of the King's guards, and cords with them, and whatsoever else they understood to be necessary for the Prophet's preservation, and to draw him up immediately. So the Ethiopian took the men he was ordered to take, and drew up the Prophet out of the mire, and left him at liberty in the prison." (Joseph. *Antiq.*, lib. x., cap. vii., sect. 5.)

slain by the enemy's sword; but that if he would fly to the enemy, he should escape death."*

The miserable Monarch was yet irresolute, and once more requested the counsel of the deeply-injured and maligned Prophet, who still assured him, that if he would go forth and surrender to the King of Babylon, the city should be spared and himself saved; but that if he refused, he would be taken prisoner, and the city burnt with fire. "When the King heard this," says Josephus, "he said that he would willingly do what he persuaded him to, and what he declared would be to his advantage; but that he was afraid of those of his own country that had fallen away to the Babylonians, lest he should be accused by them to the King of Babylon, and be punished;"† he dreaded also the reproach to which such a step would subject him, from his people. At length, famine reduced the fatal obstinacy of the King, and Jerusalem opened her gates to the irresistible conqueror. When Zedekiah was sensible that his capital was in the hands of the enemy, "he took his wives and children, and his Captains, and his friends, and with them fled out of the city, through the fortified ditch, and through the wilderness; and when certain of the deserters had informed the Babylonians of this, at break of day, they made haste to pursue after Zedekiah, and overtook him not far from Jericho, and encompassed him about; but for those friends and Captains of Zedekiah who had fled out of the city with him, when they saw their enemies near them, they left him and dispersed themselves, some one way, and some another, every one resolving to take care of himself: so the enemy took Zedekiah alive, with his children and his wives, and brought him to the King. When he was come, Nebuchadnezzar began to call him a wicked wretch and a covenant-breaker, and one that had forgotten his former words, when he promised to keep the country for him. He also reproached him for his ingratitude, that when he had received the kingdom from him, who had taken it from Jehoiachin, and given it him, he had made use of the power he gave him, against him that gave it;—but, said he, 'God is great, who hateth that conduct of thine, and hath brought thee under us.' And when he had used these words to Zedekiah, he commanded his sons and his friends to be slain, while the royal captive and his Captains looked on; after which he put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him, and carried him to Babylon,"‡ where he died in prison. At the same time that Nebuchadnezzar thus disposed of the King, he put to death all the nobility that he found in Jerusalem, together with the Chief Priests, and other principal and official persons. The remainder, small in number, who were of any consideration, he took in triumph to Babylon, leaving the meaner classes to cultivate the land. For a year and a half had Jerusalem effectually withstood Nebuchadnezzar. Her capture took place on the ninth day of the fourth month; and on the seventh day of the fifth month, (two days, on which Hebrew devotion still

* Joseph. Antiq., lib. x., cap. vii., sect. 4.
† Ibid., lib. x., cap. vii., sect. 6.
‡ Ibid., lib. x., cap. viii., sect. 2.

commemorates the desolation of the city by solemn fast and humiliation,) Nebuzar-adan received the orders of the Assyrian King to pillage the palace and temple, to burn them both, and then to level the city and all it contained in one common ruin, and transport the captives to Babylon. The two brasen pillars which stood before the temple, were removed to the capital, to decorate the fane of Nebuchadnezzar's god.

Jeremiah survived the general overthrow, to behold the sad accomplishment of all his darkest predictions. He witnessed the horrors of the famine, and, when that had done its work, the triumph of the enemy. He saw the strong-holds of the city cast down; the palace of Solomon, the temple of God, with all its courts, its roofs of cedar and of gold, levelled to the earth, or committed to the flames; the sacred vessels, the ark of the covenant itself, with the cherubim, pillaged by profane hands. What were the feelings of a patriotic and religious Jew at this tremendous crisis, he has left on record in his unrivalled elegies. Never did city suffer a more miserable fate; never was ruined city lamented in language so exquisitely pathetic. Jerusalem is, as it were, personified and bewailed with the passionate sorrow of private and domestic attachment; while the more general picture of the famine, the common misery of every rank and age and sex, all the desolation, the carnage, the violation, the dragging away into captivity, the remembrance of former glories, of the gorgeous ceremonies, and the glad festivals, the awful sense of the divine wrath heightening the present calamities, are successively drawn with all the life and reality of an eye-witness in that inimitable poem, "The Lamentations of Jeremiah." "Never," says Bishop Lowth, "was there a more rich and elegant variety of beautiful images and adjuncts arranged together within so small a compass, nor more happily chosen and applied." "One would think," says Dr. South, "that every letter was written with a tear,—every word, the sound of a breaking heart;—that the author was compacted of sorrows,—disciplined to grief from his infancy,—one who never breathed but in sighs, nor spoke but in a groan."

The miserable remnant of the people were placed under the command of Gedaliah, as a Pasha of the great Assyrian Monarch; the seat of government was fixed at Mizpeh. Nebuchadnezzar formed a more just estimate of the character of Jeremiah, and of the value of his counsels, than the Princes of his own country, and gave a special charge to his Captain, Nebuzar-adan, not only to provide for him, but also to follow his advice. (Jer. xxxix. 12.) He was accordingly removed from the prison, and allowed free choice either to go to Babylon, where, doubtless, he would have been held in honour in the royal court, or to remain with his own people. We need scarcely be told, that he who had devoted more than forty years of unrequited service to the welfare of his falling country, should choose to remain with the remnant of his people, rather than seek the precarious fame which might await him at the court of the King of Babylon. Accordingly, he went to Mizpeh with Gedaliah. Among those who had repaired to that place, was a Prince of the seed-royal, named Ishmael, with a

small party of Ammonites. He appears to have been a wicked and abandoned person; and, instigated by the King of Ammon, he contrived by deceit and treachery to murder Gedaliah, and a considerable portion of his followers, and to effect his escape to Rabbah; and the remainder of the Jews, having chosen one Johanan for their leader, now resolved to pass into Egypt, notwithstanding the earnest and oft-repeated remonstrances of the Prophet, who endeavoured to persuade Johanan to remain in the land, assuring them by a message from God, in answer to their inquiries, that if they did so, the Lord would build them up; but if they fled into Egypt, the evils which they sought to escape should come upon them there. (Jer. xlii. 10, &c.) The people refused to attend to the divine message, saying, "We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the Lord your God," and resolved to pass into Egypt, taking Jeremiah and Baruch along with them. (Jer. xliii. 6.) But there they were speedily overtaken by the punishment of which the Prophet had forwarned them; for Nebuchadnezzar soon after invaded Egypt, and having defeated Pharaoh-Hophra, and taken him prisoner, put to death the refugee Jews whom he found there, with the exception of about *seven hundred* persons, whom he carried away with him to Babylon. About this time the Prophet died: some conclude that he was put to death by the Jews; others, by Hophra the King of Egypt; others suppose that he was stoned by the people of Taphnæ, where the Jews were settled; and many confidently assert, that he joined his brethren in Babylon, and closed his career there, it being difficult, as they say, otherwise to account for the preservation of his writings, which relate to this period; while Dr. Hales states, that his last and most ominous prophecy proved fatal to himself,—his ungrateful and infatuated countrymen stoned him to death, and cast his body into a pit.

SECTION II.—OF DANIEL.

"NOTHING could present," writes the author of the History of the Jews, "a more striking contrast to their native country, than the region into which the Hebrews were transplanted. Instead of their irregular and picturesque mountain-city, crowning its unequal heights, and looking down into its deep and precipitous ravines, through one of which a scanty stream wound along,—they entered the vast square and level city of Babylon, occupying both sides of the broad Euphrates; while all around spread immense plains, which were intersected by long straight canals, bordered by rows of willows. How unlike their national temple—a small but highly finished and richly adorned fabric, standing in the midst of its courts on the brow of a lofty precipice—the colossal temple of the Chaldean Bel, rising from the plain, with its eight stupendous stories or towers, one above the other, to the perpendicular height of a furlong! The palace of the Babylonian Kings was more than twice the size of their whole city: it covered eight miles, with its hanging gardens built on arched terraces, each rising above the other, and rich in all the luxuriance of artificial cultivation. How different from the sunny cliffs

of their own land, where the olive and the vine grew spontaneously, and the cool, shady, and secluded valleys, where they could always find shelter from the heat of the burning noon! No wonder then that, in the pathetic words of their own hymn, 'By the waters of Babylon they sat down and wept, when they remembered thee, O Zion.' The Psalm above quoted seems to intimate, that the Babylonians had taste enough to appreciate their poetical and musical talent, and that they were summoned occasionally to amuse the banquets of their masters, though it was much against their will that they sang the songs of Zion in a strange land. In general, it seems that the Jewish exiles were allowed to dwell together in considerable bodies, not sold as household or personal slaves, at least, not those of the better order, of whom the captivity chiefly consisted. They were colonists rather than captives, and became by degrees possessed of considerable property. There was one large settlement on the river Chebar, considerably to the north of Babylon. It was there that the Prophet Ezekiel related his splendid visions, which seem imbued with the immense and gigantic character of the region and empire of Babylon. To the bold and rapid creations of the earlier Hebrew poets, Ezekiel adds not merely a vehement and tragical force, peculiar to his own mind, but a vastness and magnificence of imagery, drawn from the scenery and circumstances by which he was surrounded. The world of Ezekiel, and that of his contemporary, Daniel, seems enlarged; and the future teems with imperial dynasties, and wide and universal monarchies."

Of the general treatment of the captives, we know but little. With the exception of those who were transported to the Assyrian capital, previous to the taking and destruction of Jerusalem, there is reason to believe, they were treated with considerable severity, insomuch that the Prophets who resided among them, denounced, in accents both mournful and bitter, the woe of Babylon. And although Almighty God has frequently made use of earthly potentates, who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, to chastise and afflict his heritage, he has ever been jealous on their account, and has not failed to visit with condign punishment those powers when they have betrayed malignity, or triumphed over the chosen of the Lord. In process of time, the condition of these exiles from their father-land was considerably mitigated, and the Jewish religion began to be respected and understood; for, let it be remembered, it has ever formed a part of the inscrutable, though beneficent, counsels of the Most High, not only to correct and purify his people by affliction in the chief seats of idolatry, but to turn the chastisement into a blessing, by making them instrumental of spiritual good to the Heathen.

Nebuchadnezzar has been celebrated as one of the most illustrious Monarchs, and as a prudent, brave, and successful warrior. In early life he ascended the throne of Babylon; and to the extensive dominions which he inherited from his father, he made large additions by his own conquests, insomuch that the greatest part of the then known world was tributary. "All people, nations, and languages

trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down." (Dan. v. 19.) He was now in the second year of his reign, and was reposing for a time, after many and numerous military exploits, and embellishing his capital, both by land and water, with those wonders which have contributed as much to its celebrity as any remarkable events with which its history is associated. His tyranny, however, was equal to his magnificence and splendour.

The words of Isaiah to Hezekiah, "Thy sons shall be chamberlains in the palace of the King of Babylon," were, at the expiration of little more than a century, fulfilled. When Kings and nobles, Priests and people, were carried into captivity, Nebuchadnezzar gave orders that out of the families of the most honourable such children as were best looking, and of the best parts, should be instructed in the language and learning of the Chaldeans, in order that, in due time, they might be appointed to responsible offices in his household. Among these were Daniel and three of his companions, who, at the first invasion of the Assyrian King, were transported to Babylon, probably as hostages for the good conduct and submission of the vassal Monarch. "These young men were treated with much kindness, and educated with great assiduity in the manners and duties of the Assyrian court, as well as in all the half-scientific, half-superstitious knowledge, the astronomy, the divination, and skill in the interpretation of dreams, for which the priesthood of the Chaldeans long maintained unrivalled celebrity."* In such a situation, and surrounded with all that was evil, these youths had every temptation to forget the religion and maxims of their fathers. Ignoble and undisciplined minds are disposed to, and frequently do, exchange the customs, the institutions, the language, and even the faith, of their ancestors, for those of the spot wherever their abode is fixed, and however notoriously opposite and distinct such profession from the former one may be found. Such unprincipled characters would hail with gladness the opportunity of a removal from the promised land, and a separation from the temple, in order that they might have an excuse to shake off the burden of their law, and free themselves from the bondage of its ordinances. In this class Daniel and his companions were not to be found. They were to be sumptuously fed from the King's table: this, however, would involve them in legal defilement: they therefore obtained from the officer who was charged with their education that they might be fed with pulse and water, on which they throve so well, as to surpass in the healthiness and vigour of their looks those who were not troubled with a tender conscience, and had luxuriated in the dainties and wine which the King's purveyor furnished. Corresponding with the personal appearance of the young men, were their mental qualifications, so that when brought up for examination, in order to their appointment in the palace, Daniel and his associates were selected for the high posts of waiting immediately upon the person of the King. Daniel received the name of Belteshazzar; his

* History of the Jews, vol. ii., p. 5.

chief companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, those of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.*

The early history and moral training of the Hebrew youths are by no means destitute of interest. The mode of the new spiritual creation of which they were the subjects, is hidden, to a great extent, from the highest order of finite intelligence. "We are permitted, however, to trace the operation of the means divinely employed, so far at least as to discover in them the uniformity of a law not less certain than that which 'binds the sweet influences of the Pleiades.' Before honour is humility: the way to glory lies through the vale of humiliation. How little can be foreseen from the earlier steps of those whom the King of saints delighteth to honour, of their future elevation! Joseph, forgotten in the dungeon, was in a course of moral preparation for the highest honours of Egypt, and for the deliverance of his father's house. The babe, who wept by the banks of the Nile, was designed to be the lawgiver of Israel. Saul of Tarsus, led in solitude and blindness to an obscure street in Damascus, was destined to become the 'very chiefest of the Apostles.' The distinguished champion of the Reformation begged his daily bread, in childhood, from door to door. The children of Judah, who maintained their steadfastness in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, were torn from the parental roof as captives of war. They were introduced to the court of Babylon by the express command of the King. The royal palace was at that time a scene of extraordinary splendour. The nobles revelled in luxury; and nothing was wanting that might inflame the passions of a youth. Led into the banquetting-rooms, glistening with a thousand gems, and thronged with the fairest and noblest of the land, their dignified appearance and singular beauty of countenance rivetted the admiring gaze of all. Yet, amid the enchantment of the scene, they retained their sacred integrity; and, although surrounded by so many polluting influences, they preserved their heavenly purity. From the first, the young men knew the danger of their position, and they attended with diligence to the means of safety. How is this to be accounted for? When we recollect the degeneracy of the times in which they lived, and the sad decline of their countrymen from the principles and practices of true

* It was customary in the East, when a change took place in one's condition in life, and especially if the personal liberty of the individual was affected, to change his name. (2 Kings xxiii. 34; xxiv. 17; Esther ii. 7; Ezra v. 14.) The name of Daniel, which literally signified, "God is my Judge," was altered to "Belteshazzar," that is, "Beli Princeps, Princeps cui Belus favet." Hananiah, whose name implied, "The grace, mercy, and gift of the Lord," or, "The Lord has been gracious to me," was changed to "Shadrach," which has been variously translated, "The inspiration of the sun, God, the author of evil, be propitious to us; let God preserve us from evil." Mishael signifies, "He who comes from God." Him they called Meshach, which in Chaldee signifies, "He who belongs to the goddess Sheshach;" a celebrated deity of the Babylonians, mentioned by Jeremiah. (xxv. 26.) Azariah, which signifies, "The Lord is my helper," they changed into Abednego, which in Chaldee means, "The servant of Nego," who was one of their divinities, by which they meant either the sun, or the morning star; whether Jupiter or Venus. Dr. A. Clarke observes, "The vicious pronunciation of this name should be carefully avoided; I mean, that which lays the accent upon the second syllable, and hurries to the end, without attending to the natural division of the word 'Abed-nego.'"

piety, this remarkable exception to the almost universal state of moral delinquency cannot be attributed to the influence of external circumstances. It is equally certain that their early maturity in goodness did not arise from any native superiority. Their heart was originally depraved, and at enmity with God. There was everything around them to foster its evil propensities. If, therefore, we find them in the enjoyment of friendship with the divine Being, and manifestly walking according to the direction of his hand, there must have been a transformation of character as real as it was marvellous. They must have been led to deep repentance, and to exercise faith in the Messiah who should come 'to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness!'" *

After Nebuchadnezzar had successfully concluded the Tyrian war, he invaded Egypt, and quickly overran the whole extent of the country, from Migdol, its northern extremity near the Red Sea, to Syene, the southern, bordering on Ethiopia, or Abyssinia, which he also reduced, with the other auxiliaries of the Egyptians; and was revelling in ease and greatness, when it pleased the Most High to make him an instrument for his revelation of the future. He visited him with a dream which exceedingly affected him; but after he awoke, he retained nothing of the visions of the night, but the troubled feelings which still agitated his mind. Eager to recover the memory of that which so greatly disturbed him, he commanded the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, and Chaldeans to appear before him, whom he required to supply him with the facts of the dream, and at the same time its interpretation. Accustomed as the Monarch was to be gratified with implicit obedience in everything that he wished, he was exceedingly enraged when he found that these men limited their skill in intepretation to an acquaintance with the facts of the dream; and these being unknown, they frankly confessed they could do nothing. It must, however, be acknowledged, that the requisition of the King to the wise men of Babylon was based on profound policy. He justly considered their telling the dream itself, as a sure test of the truth of their interpretation afterwards, and which it was not unreasonable to require of them even upon their own principles; because the same divine power which could communicate to them the interpretation, as they professed, could also communicate to them the dream itself. In the raging fever of his disappointment, he commanded all the wise men in Babylon to be put to death.† "Ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill." (Dan. ii. 5.) Daniel and his companions, being numbered among the

* The Hebrew Martyrs; or, the Triumph of Principle. By John Waddington, pp. 13—15. London, 1844.

† Such acts of cruelty and capricious tyranny were by no means uncommon among the despots of the East. Herodotus relates that Astyages, King of the Medes, put to death all those who had given him erroneous advice, as the event proved, with regard to Cyrus. (Herod. *Clio.*, cap. 128.) And Xerxes, when constructing a bridge of boats across the Hellespont, and a storm destroyed it, ordered the superintendents of the work to be beheaded, and then commanded two pair of chains to be thrown into the sea, as if he meant to shackle and confine it, and his men to chastise it, by giving it *three hundred* strokes of a whip. (Herod., lib. vii., cap. 33—36.)

Magi of the empire, were necessarily included in the decree: "They sought Daniel and his fellows, to be slain." (Dan. ii. 13.)

No sooner was Daniel made acquainted with the jeopardy in which he and his companions were placed, than he went boldly to Nebuchadnezzar, "and desired that he would give him time, and that he would show the King the interpretation." (Dan. ii. 16.) He does not appear to have been prompted to take this step by any special communication from Jehovah, but by faith only; a faith which was the result of his habitual intercourse with God, which was built upon the great and wonderful mercies which had been manifested toward his fathers, and experienced by himself, and which had been confirmed by the Holy Spirit of God prompting it with high confidence, and illumining all darkness of doubt. Thus acting, he threw himself upon God, and requested the prayers of his companions; remembering the promise, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Prov. iii. 6.) Nor did they pray in vain. God heard the supplications of his faithful, though oppressed, church. In the course of the night, the secret of the dream was revealed; and after he had acknowledged the mercy of the Most High in a song of praise, he went with confidence before the King, and informed him that it was from God in heaven, and not from his own human wisdom, that he had obtained the revelation of the secret, and forthwith proceeded to state the circumstances of the dream, and then the interpretation.

From the thanksgiving which Daniel offered to God, and the declaration which he made when brought before the King, we may collect both the occasion and the drift of the dream. The thoughts which came into the King's mind upon his bed were, "what should come to pass hereafter;" or, what should be the future destiny of that great empire which he had now acquired; whether it should continue, or whether it should be changed, and pass away to others, in the course of "those seasons and times of revolution in which God removeth and setteth up Kings;" and the ensuing dream figuratively intimated that it should be changed. In the compound image which he saw in this vision, 1. "The head of pure gold," denoted Nebuchadnezzar himself, and the succeeding Kings of the Babylonian dynasty; 2. "The breast and arms of silver," the next kingdom of the Medes and Persians, inferior to the former; 3. "The belly and the thighs of brass," the succeeding kingdom of the Macedonians and Greeks, whose arms were brass; 4. "The legs of iron, and the feet and toes partly iron, and partly clay," the empire of the Romans, which should be as strong as iron; but the kingdoms into which it was to be divided, composed of heterogeneous materials, which should be partly strong, and partly weak; and, 5. The spiritual kingdom of the stone, or of Christ, which was to be set up by the God of heaven, "in the days of these Kings," or, before the end of the last, the Roman empire, upon the ruins of those temporal kingdoms and empires; and was destined to fill the whole earth, and to stand and continue for ever: * a prophecy which, from that day to this, has been running its course, and is still running. Suffice it to say, that the King

* Hales's Analysis of Chronology, &c., vol. ii., p. 457. 8vo. London, 1830.

recognised his lost dream, and without hesitation appears to have accepted its interpretation. Daniel obtained the only reward for which he cared,—a public recognition of the greatness and glory of the God of Israel; and he received a recompence which to one as mercenary as Balaam would be the *summum bonum* of his desires. Nebuchadnezzar prostrated himself before Daniel, and offered him incense, according to the usual mode of adoration to Kings and superiors in the east; the Prophet was loaded with magnificent presents, appointed ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and made chief Governor, or President, (Rab-mag, or *Archimagus*, Jer. xxxix. 3,) over the whole college of wise men in Babylon,—the two highest civil and ecclesiastical employments in the state. When Daniel entered upon the duties of his somewhat novel office, he forgot not his friends and companions in tribulation; but at his request they were promoted, under him, to conduct the affairs of the province of Babylon, while he acted himself as Privy Counsellor to the King, to advise him in the administration of justice.

The companions of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, addressed themselves to the King's business with diligence and care. Attempting nothing in the form of display, they pursued the even tenor of their course, exemplifying a wise and beneficial administration. Envy was ultimately excited; their enemies sought to injure their reputation at court, and to alienate from them the royal favour. It was not long before an opportunity was afforded. Nebuchadnezzar was a gross idolater, and not many months elapsed after the event which we have just recorded, when a colossal image of gold * was erected by the haughty and arrogant conqueror, as if in opposition to his dream, and the interpretation thereof. The conduct of the King on this occasion certainly proves that the miraculous interposition of the Most High, with regard to the import of the vision, made no lasting impression on his mind. The consecration of this idol to Bel or Belus, (Dan. iv. 8,) shows, also, that he no longer acknowledged the superiority of the God of Daniel. (Dan. ii. 47.) Having erected this statue, he issued a royal mandate, requiring the authorities of the land to attend at the grand festival to be held at its dedication. Doubtless the Hebrew Princes received the summons to be present, and to render their homage. Their absence could not be overlooked; and the utmost advantage would be taken of it by their active and malignant foes. The situation of these confessors was doubtless one of great difficulty. "Emergencies analogous to it," says a modern writer, "arise in the history of every servant of God. The incidents connected with it may not be so striking, but to himself they are equally trying. A step is to be taken, decisively, which must affect his character and destiny for life. The secret and most important point involved in it, is fidelity to God. No friend on earth can advise with him conclusively in the matter, for he cannot enter fully into all the circumstances of the case; nor is he acquainted with the inward monitions of conscience which should be taken into account. He may state general principles; such, for example, as this, 'The

* For some particulars respecting Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, see note A, p. 90.

will of God is your sanctification;' 'In all thy ways acknowledge him;' 'Do all to the glory of God;' but their special application rests with the individual who should best know his own position. A trial is presented, and every facility is given to evade it; none of his acquaintance will be reluctant to justify his immediate escape from it, but will rather applaud his determination to turn away. Yet within him there is a deep and a solemn consciousness that to do this would be to betray his trust. Then is to be fulfilled the saying of the Lord Jesus, 'He that loveth his life shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal.'

"It is not sufficient to imagine reasons that might have been urged with some degree of plausibility, to dissuade the youths from a rash exposure to the wrath of the King. 'Let us consider,' one of them might have said, 'the fatal consequences of maintaining, under existing circumstances, inflexible adherence to an abstract principle. By a remarkable interposition of Providence, we have been raised to places of honour and emolument. Our influence is gradually extending in the country, and facilities, ere long, no doubt, will be afforded for religious usefulness. All will be lost by precipitation. The posts we hold will be occupied by men of opposite views, who will employ their official power to crush what we have attempted with so much care to foster. There is no hope of making the slightest impression by the open avowal of our principles in a juncture like this. To do so, will be perfectly suicidal: it will only be to offer ourselves as sheep for the slaughter. And where is the necessity for it? Can we not mingle in the crowd, and present a kind of homage in our civil capacity to the golden image, which involves no act of religious worship?* In a short time events may transpire that will enable us to speak with greater advantage from our present moderation. Besides, after the royal favours we have received, obstinate pertinacity, and that on an occasion of such great national interest, will be looked upon as ingratitude, and disaffection to the state. Our countrymen will also suffer, and the happy state of tranquillity hitherto

* "There are three sorts of men who think they may be freed from the charge of idolatry for any outward, reverent gesture yielded unto an image, having their heart free: those who do thus conform to please a Prince, or, through fear, to escape the peril of death, or other grievous punishment; or those who approach such idolatrous services, and pomp of Papal superstitious ceremonies, only to see the manner of them. But all these are found to be in great error. 1. The Lord, in the second commandment, directly forbids bowing down to such images. And the Lord saith to the Prophet Elias, that he had reserved seven thousand who had not bowed their knees unto Baal. 2. Our bodies, with our souls, are the temples of the Spirit; and therefore neither the one nor the other should be defiled, but preserved pure and holy for the Lord. 3. It satisfieth the idolaters themselves, if men be but conformable in their outward gesture to their idolatrous service; as, in this case, Nebuchadnezzar exacteth no confession of the mouth or subscription with the hand of or unto this image, but only to fall down and worship it. 4. In the purer ages of the church, even they were held to be idolaters who, being constrained by force, did yield the least outward service unto the idols of the Gentiles; as Origen was excommunicate of the church for holding a little incense in his hand before an idol. 5. The Romanists will not come to our churches and service when there is no external object that may offend them; therefore, much less should Protestants show such weakness as to assemble with them in their idolatrous temples which lay so many stumbling-blocks before their eyes."—*Hexapla in Danielem.* By Daniel Willett. Fol., 1610.

enjoyed will be broken up, without the faintest prospect that any good will be effected to counterbalance the serious evils that must inevitably accrue. Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself overwise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?' Had counsels and suggestions of this nature been entertained, the young men would have been enfeebled, divided in opinion, and so filled with anxious misgivings, as to become unfitted for the high resolve, fidelity to God now commanded. But they knew what to do. This was not the first time they had to ask mercies of the God of heaven, and to inquire his will. They acted in concert. They were agreed in the request they should offer, and were prepared to submit the judgment, the conscience, and the affections to divine control. The sincere Christian, relying implicitly on his gracious Leader, never needs to fear that he shall lose his way. The saying of the Lord Jesus is divinely true: 'The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.' As on the night when the Lord stood by the Apostle, and said, 'Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome;'—so distinctly was the will of God made known to his witnesses in the province of Babylon. Charged to bear testimony to the truth, their determination was inflexible. The firmness and resolution called forth by a sense of Christian duty, is truly wonderful. It is said of President Edwards, that 'one of the most impressive features of his moral and religious character, was the paramount regard for duty which controlled all his actions. When his mind was once made up to the course he should pursue, he was distinguished by a stern fixedness of purpose, an indomitable resolve, which no consideration of interest, no strength of prejudices, no allurements of ease, no impulse of passion could penetrate or soften. All these fell around him, like snow-flakes on granite, and produced about as much effect.' We have a noble example of this in St. Paul, when he met the elders at Miletus. Yet there is a distinctive peculiarity in decision of character, arising out of the force of holy principles, which should be carefully noted. It is not blind and impetuous, and there is nothing in it reckless or irrational."*

The principles which until now had governed these devoted men were about to be tested. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (James i. 12.) The scene that is described in the third chapter of the Book of Daniel is highly imposing. A vast multitude are assembling on the plain of Dura. The pomp and splendour of Babylon are gathered to render honour to the golden image which the King had erected. Presently the royal Herald proclaims, "To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchad-

* The Hebrew Martyrs, &c. By John Waddington. Pp. 33—36. See also Scripture Characters. By the Rev. Thomas Robinson, M.A. Vol. ii., p. 424. 8vo. edit. London. Longman, 1818.

nezzar the King hath set up: and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."* (Dan. iii. 4—6.) The immense multitude would eagerly fall down, and yield the obsequious and disgusting homage. The enemies of the Hebrews, judging the moment had arrived in which they must be undone for ever, immediately announced their absence from the festival to the Sovereign, saying, "O King, live for ever. There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; these men, O King, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."† Messengers were immediately despatched to bring the nonconformists into the royal presence, to answer the charge of the Chaldeans. We may imagine them standing in the centre of a malignant group of spectators, and in the presence of an exasperated and furious Monarch. The silence of the moment is broken by Nebuchadnezzar, who thus addresses the offending captives: "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made, well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" Shadrach and his companions staggered not, nor felt any difficulty in determining the line of conduct which they ought to pursue. Without even alluding to their individual interest or preservation, or endeavouring by any subtleties to evade or explain away the guilt of sinful concession, and without even seeking to avert the King's displeasure by any mean and cowardly artifice or obsequious persuasion, they declared their unalterable purpose to hazard all consequences, and maintain steadfast adherence to the worship of Jehovah. The result of their early training, and the effect of fervent and habitual prayer, are now conspicuous. Their minds were resolved. They required no time for deliberation. Their spirit rose with the increasing responsibility of their situation, and at once they expressed those

* For some further considerations on this subject, see note B, p. 92.

† "1. The malicious Chaldees were so incensed against the servants of God, who refused to worship the image, that they could not stay at all; but presently, at the same instant, they made their complaint of them. 2. They bend their accusation, not only against those three, whom they hold to be offenders, but against the whole nation of the Jews. 'They *grievously* accused the Jews.' 3. They, by flattering speech, insinuated themselves to the King, that they might be the better heard. 'O King, live for ever!' 4. Then they subtilly seek to bring their persons into disgrace and hatred: (1.) By their nation and country, they were Jews, the King's captives and vassals. (2.) By their unthankfulness for the benefits which the King had bestowed upon them, who had made them governors and chief officers. (3.) By their apostacy, that, being called by Babylonian names, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and incorporated into that nation, yet were of a diverse religion and usage. 5. Then followeth the crime, which they object against them, which was threefold: (1.) Contempt of the King's commandment and decree. (2.) Irreligion in not worshipping the King's gods. (3.) Mutiny and sedition in being singular, among the rest, in that they did not fall down before the King's image."—*Hexapla in Danielem.* By Andrew Willett. Fol., 1610.

noble sentiments recorded by the pen of inspiration, the heroism and sublimity of which will be applauded unto the end of time :—"O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King. But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." One thing they had to do. Whatever the issue of the contest might be, the duty of these noble men was as clear as a sunbeam. "If it be so," said the intrepid confessors, "our God whom we serve is able to deliver us, and he will deliver us ; *but if not*, we will not serve thy gods." *

This praiseworthy independence of spirit which was manifested by these Hebrew confessors gave them a moral superiority which in a considerable degree disturbed the mind of Nebuchadnezzar. From the sacred record we learn that it excited his fiercest indignation. "Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego : therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the King's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace." (Dan. iii. 19—23.) None can contemplate this scene without admiring the piety and courage of the three men. If, indeed, as a pious writer has observed, our religion be not worth contending for, it were absurd to incur reproach and opposition on its account : but if it be the most important concern, as it doubtless is, every other consideration should be sacrificed to it. Where, then, is our esteem for the Gospel of Christ ? We know not its value, nor are we attached to its interest, if we are easily led away by the enticements of an evil world. If we be afraid or ashamed to maintain the confession and practice of it against the infidel and the sensualist ; if we lend a listening ear, and yield to the suggestions and solicitations of those who would induce us to abandon the truth, it would not then be so properly stated that our principles have been renounced, as that we are desti-

* Never was the observation of the heathen poet better illustrated than in the history before us :—

"Justum ac tenacem propositi virum
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni,
Mente quatit solida."

Hor., *Carm.*, lib. iii., 3.

Thus translated by Francis :—

"The man in conscious virtue bold,
Who dares his secret purpose hold,
Unshaken hears the crowd's tumultuous cries,
And the stern tyrant's brow, in act to rage."

tute of all good principles. Those adversaries are far less dangerous to Christianity who openly, and without a blush, reject the whole scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ, than those who privately profess attachment to it, but in public shrink from its avowal. Let us cease to talk of the prudence or expediency of temporizing, as though our usefulness and peace could be increased and established by an occasional conformity to the sinful maxims and customs of an unregenerate world. According to this scheme, the noble army of martyrs acted a most foolish part, and the church would have been better served had they spared their blood! If such a plan had been adopted in this country, the Pope and the devil would have been the harmonious dividers of the spoil, and the announcement of the doctrines of the cross have been hushed in the silence of the grave. The undaunted confessors of the faith in every age have appealed to the word of God, and to the reason of those who would draw them from their steadfastness. "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye." (Acts iv. 19.) "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but fear him, who after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell." (Luke xii. 4, 5.) The Most High is more honoured by our steadfast adherence to his cause, than by our cowardly desertion. Let us therefore allow no circumstances in which we may be placed to terrify or alarm. Shame, poverty, imprisonment, or even "the burning fiery furnace," are infinitely less to be dreaded than the frown and indignation of a just and sin-avenging God!

The Hebrews were cast down, but not destroyed. They were bound, but they lost nothing of their liberty; although the hallowed intrepidity and courage with which they vindicated the insulted honour of Jehovah exasperated the Monarch more and more, his rage and pride were suffered to break forth with unrestrained violence, as if to remind Nebuchadnezzar of his former ephemeral and forgotten convictions, and to convince his subjects how weak and contemptible an earthly potentate can become, when he is "by stronger arm belaboured." The heat of the furnace reached an intensity that might fuse steel or liquify the diamond; but to these confessors it became as harmless and refreshing as the gentle mountain breeze. This the King ere long was made to know. In astonishment he rose up in haste, and said to his counsellors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the King, True, O King. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."* This effectually subdued the wrath of the King, so that he instantly called forth the persecuted saints from their prison. The fourth person alluded to has been present in every scene of tribulation into which devoted men have been led for the sake of truth since the world began. His

* It is not improbable that Daniel might have communicated to Nebuchadnezzar, Nathan and David's prophecies of the Son of God. (2 Sam. vii. 14; Psalm ii. 7; cx. 1, &c.)

presence has cheered the solitude of the desert; it has made the dungeon as the vestibule of glory; it has filled the house of mourning, like that of the spirit of a better world; it has given a tranquillity in the midst of tumult, like the serene vault of heaven; and even in the agony of death, and in the loneliness of the dark valley, it has brought to the soul of the believer light and joy fresh from the fount of God. The utmost rage and hostility of all the powers of evil can only drive the faithful follower of Christ nearer to him who is the source of his strength, and the spring of all his joys. "Upon their bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their heads singed; neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them;" and thus was the promise fulfilled, "The Lord will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness: for by strength shall no man prevail."

Those who have been valiant for the truth, and even ready to die for its advancement, have ever felt the inwrought assurance of its ultimate prevalence and success. The language addressed by the Genevan Reformer to the imperious and persecuting Monarch of France expresses convictions common to all who have been commissioned to make known the revealed thoughts of God. "We are," said he, "fully conscious to ourselves how very mean and abject we are, being miserable sinners before God, and accounted most despicable before men; being (if you please) the refuse of the world, deserving of the vilest appellations that can be found; so that nothing remains for us to glory in before God, but his mercy alone by which, without any merit of ours, we have been admitted to the hope of eternal salvation, and before men nothing but our weakness, the slightest confession of which is esteemed by them as the greatest disgrace. But our doctrine must stand exalted above all the glory, and invincible by all the power, of the world; because it is not ours, but the doctrine of God and of his Christ, whom the Father hath constituted King, that he may have 'dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth;' and that he may rule in such a manner, that the whole earth, with its strength of iron and brass, with its splendour of gold and silver, smitten by the rod of his mouth, may be broken to pieces like a potter's vessel; for thus do the Prophets foretell the magnificence of his kingdom." Hitherto the course of truth in our revolted world serves rather to illustrate the magnitude of the obstacles to be removed, and the might of the foes with which it has to contend, than to exhibit, on a scale that might strike the common observer, the rapidity and splendour of its victories. It is the determination of the Most High that no flesh shall glory in his presence. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." He will make his strength perfect in our weakness. The recorded experience of his servants, who have laboured for truth in past times, is designed to impress more deeply this sentiment on the hearts of his people. Yet it is one they are too slow to learn. Oftentimes the chosen witness for God has passed through years of suffering, and has sustained a long succession of bitter disappointments, before he could feel habitually

his own nothingness, and rest at the same time in the assurance of the divine all-sufficiency. Whenever that preparation of mind has been vouchsafed, the right hand of the Most High has achieved at once that which never could have been accomplished by the combined energies of all created beings exerted through the whole period of their existence. It is possible that obstructions may arise to the progress of holy principles far more formidable than have yet been known, and that the church may be trained to a dependence on divine aid far more simple and entire than that now felt. The signal to break up the camp, and to depart from the sunny glades in which it has long reposed, for the toilsome march and the arduous struggle, will call forth the spirit of mutiny. Having in a state of comparative truce "enjoyed great quietness," murmurs will be raised against pushing the contest further. In the day of conflict, many will be found more fit for the hospital than the field. Even the anticipation of it will prompt many to ask leave of absence. Victory may seem more remote than ever. Nevertheless the purposes of God cannot be broken. The designs of infinite wisdom and love shall have their fullest accomplishment. There shall come a period when the sacred principles of the Gospel shall have a blessed and an illimitable sway. "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." (Isai. xxx. 26.) Already some gleams of its splendour have burst forth from the thickest gloom. The proudest opponents of the truth have had to acknowledge its power. The haughty Monarch of Babylon was constrained to make this confession: "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the King's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God." By the same sublime principle of trust in the Most High, the word of Kings shall again be changed. Truths, simple and divine, proclaimed in weakness, in sorrow, and in the midst of scorn, shall find their way secretly to the minds and hearts of men; and, though long buried, they shall effect a moral revolution: no decrees of senates, and no devices of human policy, can prevent. "Just as the seeds scattered in one generation, after lodging in the fissures of the rock that frowns over all that is good and free and happy, gather strength from every dew-drop, and sunbeam, till at length they tear it from its seat; so silent shall be the germination of truth in the hearts of the people, and far more momentous its results." *

Thirty years rolled away, when Almighty God again visited Nebuchadnezzar with perplexing dreams, and exalted his name among the Heathen through the wisdom imparted to Daniel. Having raised the Chaldean empire to a state of grandeur till then unparalleled, and enriched his metropolis with the spoils of vanquished nations; having terminated his victorious wars, and completed many astonishing

* The Hebrew Martyrs; or, the Triumph of Principle. By John Waddington. Pp. 50—53. London, 1844.

and ingenious designs for the enlargement, strength, and beauty of his capital, and whilst he was enjoying the fruit of his ambition and his toils; he had a dream or vision which filled him with fearful apprehension and alarm. He saw a stately tree, fair and flourishing to look upon, affording shelter to the beasts of the field, and food to the fowls of the air; he witnessed an angel descend from heaven, who ordered it to be cut down; but the stump of the tree was to remain until "seven times," or seven years, had passed over it, when the fallen tree should recover its former height and stateliness. The wise men and astrologers of Babylon acknowledged their inability to expound the dream, when Daniel was summoned into the presence of the King, and ultimately declared the import of the vision. The great and flourishing tree denoted the King himself, his greatness and dominion. The holy Watcher who came down from heaven, and commanded to hew down the tree, but to bind the stump of its roots that was left in the ground with a band of iron and brass, that it might be wet with the dew of heaven, and its portion with the beasts of the field, until the expiration of seven times, signified the decree of the Most High, that he should be deprived of his reason, dethroned, be banished from men, or human society, that he should associate with the beasts of the field for seven years, until, by means of this wholesome but severe discipline, he should come to himself, and acknowledge the supremacy of Almighty God, "who ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." Daniel followed this interpretation of the dream with impressive and excellent counsel. "Wherefore, O King, break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity." (Dan. iv. 27.)

The threatened judgment was delayed for the space of twelve months, to allow the guilty Monarch time for repentance. He continued, however, to walk in the pride of his heart, forgetting his dependence upon God, and arrogating glory to himself; until one day, when he was amusing himself in his palace, and from some proud eminence of the building, taking an extensive survey of his metropolis; and, boasting of his mighty achievements, he exclaimed, in the hearing of some obsequious courtier in attendance upon his person, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the house (capital) of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" "While the word was in the King's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O Nebuchadnezzar! to thee be it spoken, thy kingdom is departed from thee." The same hour the thing foretold was fulfilled: he lost his reason and memory at once, became incapable of governing the kingdom, and even of human converse. Not one trace of his former rank, rationality, or grandeur remained; but he became like a beast of the field, ran wild, and shunned the society of mankind. His Ministers, perceiving that it was the hand of Providence which had thus debased their Sovereign, and expecting, from Daniel's exposition of the dream, that the calamity would continue *seven* years, left him to his fate, and put the kingdom under a regency. There is a fragment of Chaldean history

still extant, which mentions an interregnum occasioned by this King's distraction. In this miserable condition he remained for the space of seven years, under the peculiar care of divine Providence, which is represented by a band of iron round the stump of the tree. At the end of that time he recovered his reason and his kingdom; was re-established in his former authority, his Lords and Counsellors sought unto him, and excellent majesty was apparent. Being made fully sensible of the universal and uncontrollable dominion of the Most High, by a public decree he acknowledged it throughout his great empire, and magnified the mercy of God in his restoration. Here was a reward to Daniel far more excellent than the gift of provinces. What comfort to him, both as a saint and a patriot, was here! Never, in the brightest days of the church of Jerusalem, had a foreign King confessed her God. But now, that to the eye of flesh she was prostrate in the dust, the first Monarch upon earth publicly acknowledged him. In this the Prophet could not but see a prelude to the fulfilment of his own prediction regarding the universal dominion of the kingdom of heaven. Could his eye also faintly discover the future inutility of the complex machinery of his own church, as based upon the narrow and low foundation of the priesthood of Aaron, when he saw what could be effected now that it was in abeyance? Might he not see in Nebuchadnezzar the first-fruits of that harvest of Kings and Queens, that were to be its nursing-fathers and nursing-mothers, when its pale should be opened to the whole earth? But whatever entrance might have been made for it by Nebuchadnezzar, it soon closed again, as far as he was concerned. In the ensuing year he died.*

Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by his son, Evil-Merodach.† The first act of his reign was the enlargement of the Jewish King, Jehoiachin, from his prison, whom he treated kindly and hospitably all the days of his life, setting him above the other captive Kings that were in Babylon. (Jer. lii. 32; 2 Kings xxv. 28; compare Esther iii. 1.) A Jewish tradition, noticed by Jerome, on Isai. xiv. 29, reports that Evil-Merodach, (or Foolish Merodach,) during his father's distraction, behaved so ill, in provoking a war with the Medes, that, on his recovery, Nebuchadnezzar threw him into prison, where he contracted an intimacy with Jehoiachin. It is, however, not improbable that this imprisonment took place at an earlier period. Xenophon relates, in his Cyropædia, (lib. i.,) that the son of the King of Assyria, or Babylon, during the reign of Astyages, King of Media, on a hunting party, when he was going to be married, wantonly made a predatory excursion into the Median territory, but was encountered and repulsed by a party of Medes, chiefly by the valour of young Cyrus, the grandson of Astyages, then about fifteen or sixteen years old, which fixes the date of the transaction about B.C. 584, the year of the siege of Tyre. But this aggression of Evil-Merodach, and still more his disgraceful

* Evans's Scripture Biography, pp. 181, 182.

† The accession of this Prince was in the thirty-seventh year of Jehoiachin's captivity, (Jer. lii. 31; 2 Kings xxv. 27; or B.C. 597—36; B.C. 561,) which exactly accords with the date of the accession of Ilvarodam, in Ptolemy's canon, proving that he was Evil-Merodach, and also the correctness of this period of sacred chronology from its conformity with that scientific canon. (Hales's Chronology.)

defeat, must have provoked his irritable father, and also his mother, the wife of Nebuchadnezzar,* who was a Mede herself, and the daughter of Astyages, for this insult offered to his grandfather.

On Evil-Merodach's accession to the throne, Xenophon relates that he set himself to form a powerful confederacy of the neighbouring states, the Lydians, Cappadocians, Phrygians, Carians, Paphlagonians, and Cilicians, westwards, and the Indians eastward, against the Medes; alleging that, by their junction and intermarriages with the Persians, they were grown great and powerful, and unless they were opposed with the united force of the confederates, they would subdue them separately; but Cyrus, who was appointed General of the combined army of the Medes and Persians, by Cyaxares, his uncle and father-in-law, by his promptness and activity anticipated the threatened invasion, attacked the Babylonians, routed and pursued them to their camp, and in the engagement slew their King.†

Belshazzar succeeded to the empire, who was the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, who is, however, called "his father," by the usual latitude of signification that is attached to that term in Scripture. (Dan. v. 2, 11, 13.) The only circumstances of his reign which are recorded on the sacred page, are the visions of Daniel, and the sacrilegious feast of the King, and his violent death. While he swayed the sceptre, the influence of Daniel declined, and the Jews experienced the greatest pressure from their captivity. The Prophet Isaiah described the Babylonian dynasty as "the scourge of Palestine," Nebuchadnezzar, "a serpent," Evil-Merodach, "a cockatrice," and Belshazzar, "a fiery flying serpent." Xenophon, it will be remembered, confirms this prophetic character by two atrocious instances of cruelty and barbarity, exercised by Belshazzar upon some of his chief and most deserving nobles. He slew the only son of Gobryas, in a transport of rage, because at a hunting match he hit with his spear a bear, and afterwards a lion, when the King had missed both; and, in a fit of jealousy he brutally mal-treated Gadatas, because one of his concubines had commended him as a handsome man. His last and most heinous offence was the profanation of the sacred vessels belonging to the temple of Jerusalem, which his wise grandfather, and even his foolish parent, hesitated not to respect. Having made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, he ordered those vessels to be brought during the banquet, that he, his Princes, his wives, and his concubines might drink out of them, which they did; and, to aggravate sacrilege by apostacy and rebellion, and ingratitude against the supreme Author of all their enjoyments, they "praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know, and the God in whose

* Herodotus, who calls her Nitocris, and represents her as the principal improver of Babylon, because she carried on, during her regency, the works which Nebuchadnezzar had begun before his distraction, says, that she carefully and anxiously endeavoured to obstruct the passes leading to Media, and to prevent any intercourse with that kingdom, because the Medes were now grown powerful and formidable. (Hales's Chronology.)

† Hales's Analysis of sacred Chronology, vol. ii., p. 461.

hand was their breath, and whose were all their ways, they glorified not." (Dan. v. 23.)

Almighty God, who was provoked at such insolence and impiety, denounced the doom of the King in the midst of the entertainment, by the sudden apparition of a divine hand, which wrote on the plaster of the wall a mysterious inscription. The King was terribly surprised and affrighted: "His countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote against each other."* (Dan. v. 6.) When none of the wise men of Babylon, whom the King hastily sent for, could even read,† much less interpret, the writing, Nitocris, "the Queen-mother," or "grandmother" of the King, hearing of the alarm occasioned by the prodigy, came into the banqueting room, and endeavoured to compose the mind of the King, advising him to send for Daniel, who with the Queen had been absent from the feast, as one, with whose abilities in such affairs she was well acquainted, whom she had constantly employed in the direction of the state, and as one in whom "the spirit of the gods" resided. Daniel was, therefore, immediately summoned: he modestly declined the proffered honours and rewards which Belshazzar promised, and proceeded to show, with admirable intrepidity and freedom, the designs of Jehovah, with regard to the impious and wretched Monarch. He proved that the writer of the inscription was none other than the offended God of Israel; and, after reminding the King of the punishment incurred by Nebuchadnezzar for his pride and capricious cruelty in the temporary loss of his understanding, and of his kingdom on account of his rebellion and ingratitude, he proceeded to read the inscription, which was in the Chaldee tongue: MENE, "God hath numbered thy kingdom (reign) and finished it;" the repetition emphatically signifying, that the decree was certain, and would "shortly come to pass." (See Gen. xli. 32.) TEKEL, "Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting." (Job xxxi. 6; Rev. vi. 5.) PERES, "Thy kingdom is divided;" UPHARSIN, "and given to the Mede and Persian." "In that night was Belshazzar King of the Chaldeans slain."‡ (Dan. v. 25—30.)

* This passage is supposed to be one of the finest and liveliest amplifications of dismay to be found throughout the sacred classics, and infinitely exceeds, both in accuracy and force, the most admired of the Heathen; such as, "et corde et genibus tremit," of Horace, and "tarda trementi genua labant," of Virgil.

† The reason why the Magi could not decipher the inscription, was, that it was written in the primitive Hebrew character, which differed totally from the Chaldee. It was the original from which the Samaritan was formed, and which therefore it nearly resembled, though being greatly superior to it in beauty, symmetry, and elegance. Some advantageous specimens of it are fortunately preserved on sacred shekels and Jewish coins of high antiquity, drawings of which may be seen in Walton's *Supplementum de Siclorum Formis et Inscriptionibus*, prefixed to the first volume of the London Polyglott Bible, and elsewhere.

‡ The conciseness of Holy Writ has not explained how he was slain. This we may collect, with some correction, from the account of Xenophon, that he was slain by conspirators; for he states, that Gobryas and Gadatas, who led the band that broke into the royal palace, were the first who adored the gods for having punished the impious King. Daniel's interpretation of the hand-writing upon the wall most probably hastened his doom. The conspirators, with their leaders, considered him as devoted to

The family of Nebuchadnezzar being now extinct, and the Babylonian dynasty ended, according to the testimony of the inspired Prophets, no one had a greater right to the crown than Cyaxares, or "Darius the Mede." He was pointed out as the next successor by Daniel, whose interpretation of the divine inscription must have had the strongest weight with the grandees and the whole nation; he was the Queen-mother's brother, and the next of kin by her side to the throne, and also he was the most powerful competitor for it, and a Prince of an amiable and pleasant disposition. On these accounts, the Babylonians made to him a voluntary tender of the sovereignty, which he accepted. (Dan. v. 31.)

The first act of his reign, as may be collected from the historian Berosus, was the appointment of Nabonadius, a Babylonian nobleman, not allied to the royal family, to be King, or Viceroy, under him, according to the established policy of the Medes and Persians, in order, as far as possible, to conciliate the good-will of his new subjects. Daniel, who contributed so greatly to the accession of Darius, was in high favour with him; and, accordingly, on his next appointment of the Presidents of the provinces, he placed the Prophet at their head, and designed to set him over the whole united realm, because of his consummate wisdom. (Dan. vi. 1—3.) The Median and Persian nobility could not brook the exaltation of a man who was of a despised nation, who had no country, who was a slave, and had been found in the ranks of the enemy, to become a Vizier or Satrap in the mighty empire. It is recorded, that they despaired of discovering anything whereof to accuse him in his government, which is an irrefragable proof of his uprightness and fidelity; but knowing his firmness and consistency in the worship of Jehovah alone, they laid a snare for him in this matter: the expedient, however, was, under the superintending care and control of the divine Being, made to advance his own glory, and to expedite the redemp-

immediate destruction, by Jehovah himself, for his sacrilege. The great feast, on the night of which he was slain, appears to have been a season of profound peace and tranquillity, when "a thousand of his lords" could freely come from all parts of his empire, without molestation or interruption from a besieging enemy, and when the King would be most apt "to forget God," after he had eaten and was full. Profane writers give a variety of names to the last King that reigned in Babylon: he is called by Berosus, Nabonnedus; by Megasthenes, Nabonnedochus; by Herodotus, Labynetus; and by Josephus, Naboandelus, who, he says, is the same as Belshazzar; but these authors are, on many occasions, so contradictory and inconsistent, that when they at all interfere with Scripture, their evidence must lose its authority. They agree in the important fact, that Babylon was taken during a festival; and both Herodotus and Xenophon relate the drainage of the river by Cyrus; by which stratagem he gained admission for his troops. The cause of the contradictory accounts related in the ancient writers, may, in some degree, be ascertained from the hints they give us of the state of the kingdom of Babylon, after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, or, perhaps, during his distraction. Evil-Merodach, his successor, was, as his name implies, a weak Prince; and, taking advantage of this circumstance, several of the Princes mentioned by these different authorities, may have opposed him, and successively exercised the regal power, while he only nominally retained it. And to these usurpers, in all probability, may be attributed the various accounts handed down to us of the Babylonish succession, during this period. The injured nobleman in the Cyropædia, repeatedly praises the father of that King of Babylon, whom Cyrus was proceeding against; whom the latter calls the Assyrian.

tion of his captive people. Wherever an eminent degree of vital religion has been conspicuous, even in the most exalted station, it has been the object of hatred and opposition, thus exhibiting the depravity of the human heart, that real holiness, when exemplified in life, should excite disgust and persecution.

It was a maxim of the Medo-Persian empire, that no law confirmed or signed by the King could be abrogated or altered; a maxim evidently based upon the principle, that the King was infallible; which the revocation or revision of an edict would seem to contradict. The Princes, therefore, repaired to the King, and informed him, that they had determined to establish a royal statute, that if any man should prefer a petition to any other than the King himself, whether God or man, during the space of thirty days, he should be cast into the den of lions,* kept for the punishment of criminals. The proposition flattered the vanity of Darius: blinded by which, he signed the impious decree, and it became law. In this wicked and foolish order, we perceive the distinct beginning of that deification of their despots, which Rome transferred from Asia; and Daniel gave a glorious example of resistance, which was afterwards maintained by his countrymen of the flesh, against the pretensions of the insane Caligula, and by his spiritual countrymen, the Christians, against the whole series of heathen Emperors; and which has greedily been adopted by the Church of Rome, in her iniquitous and blasphemous pretensions.

After the decree had received the sign-manual of the Monarch, Daniel was diligently watched; and as he sought no concealment, he was very soon found praying and giving thanks to God as usual, thrice a day, in his chamber, with his face towards Jerusalem; on which the Princes hastened to report him to Darius, as one who had violated the decree, and who evidently despised the authority and majesty of the King. The effect upon Darius was different from what they had anticipated. He immediately perceived the error into which he had fallen, together with the subtlety and malice of the enemies of the man of God; and it must doubtless have been mortifying to discover that whilst these men had been extolling him as a god, they had in reality been only using him as a tool to serve their own malignant and cruel purposes. He endeavoured to dissemble his resentment for the present, and laboured with great assiduity the remainder of the day, to contrive some counteracting decree, but in vain: the King was most reluctantly compelled to order his execution; and the same evening Daniel was thrown into the den of lions, when the Monarch

* Exposing to wild beasts appears to have been a punishment among the Medes and Persians. From them it doubtless passed to the Romans. In their theatres they had two sorts of amusements, each sufficiently barbarous. Sometimes they cast men naked to the wild beasts, to be devoured by them: this punishment was inflicted on slaves and vile persons. Sometimes individuals were sent into the theatre, armed, to fight with wild beasts: if they conquered, they had their lives and liberty; but if not, they fell a prey to the animals. To this latter usage, St. Paul refers, in 2 Tim. iv. 17, and 1 Cor. xv. 32. (Horne's "Introduction to the Holy Scriptures," vol. iii., p. 167. Ninth Edit.)

expressed an earnest wish, "May the God whom thou servest continually, deliver thee." (Dan. vi. 16.) *

The King evidently had some impression that the Most High would appear in behalf of his servant, notwithstanding the injustice and ingratitude which he had displayed. "A stone," we are told, "was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den;† and the King sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords, that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel." All this precaution served to render the purposes of divine Providence more conspicuous. There was no trick or collusion. If Daniel be preserved, it must be by the power of the supreme God. The same care was taken subsequently by the Jews, in the case of the burial of our Saviour, which has served as one of the strongest proofs of his resurrection. Let us, however, see "the end of the Lord." Daniel was protected, his enemies utterly confounded, and the name of the true God was made known and glorified throughout that idolatrous country. The Prophet went down into the midst of those fierce and voracious animals; and what else could have been expected, than that he would instantly have been torn to pieces? But he descended into the den in faith, and the lions seemed for a time to forget their savage nature. "No manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God." (Dan. vi. 23.)

Early the following day, after a night of mourning and fasting, Darius arose from his couch, and hastened to the den. When he came thither, he cried to Daniel with a doleful voice, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continually able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the King, O King, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O King, have I done no hurt." (Dan. vi. 20—22.) Then the King was exceedingly glad, and ordered Daniel to be drawn up, and at the same time retaliated the punishment upon his accusers, their wives, and

* "In Morocco the King has a lions' den, into which men, particularly Jews, are sometimes thrown; but the latter generally come off unhurt, because the keepers of these animals are Jews, who may safely be with them, with a rod in the hand, if they only take care to go out backwards, as the lion does not suffer any one to turn his back upon him. The other Jews do not let their brethren remain longer than a night among the lions, as they might otherwise become too hungry; but ransom them with money, which is, in fact, the King's object.

"The construction of this lions' den is thus described by Höst, in his Account of Morocco and Fez:—'At one end of the royal palace there is a place for ostriches and their young; and beyond the other end, towards the mountains, there is a large lions' den, which consists of a square hole in the ground, with a partition, in the middle of which there is a door, which the Jews, who are obliged to maintain and keep them for nothing, are able to open and shut from above, and can thus entice the lions, by means of the food, from one division to the other, that they may clean it in the mean time. It is all in the open air, and a person may look down over a wall, which is a yard and a quarter high.'"—Burder's "Oriental Customs," pp. 261, 262.

† "The mouth of the den." "A spacious subterraneous range, connected with a lake of water, as the word לָיִשׁ is sometimes taken. In ancient monarchies lions were kept for the diversion of the people, and criminals were given them for fights and for food. This, it would seem, was the case in Persia, and in Babylon. A hundred lions were once exhibited at a show in Rome." (Sutcliffe's Comment. *in loco.*)

their children, whom the lions instantly overcame, and brake their bones in pieces before they reached the bottom of the den.

> See this holy man!
> Death hath no power to harm him. Yon fell band
> Of famish'd lions, soften'd at his sight,
> Forgot their nature, and grew tame before him.
> The mighty God protects his servants thus!
> The righteous thus he rescues from the snare!
> While Fraud's artificer himself shall fall
> In the deep gulf his wily arts devised,
> To snare the innocent. H. More.

Daniel had again the inexpressible satisfaction of being the instrument of the Most High, in making His name known among the Heathen. Darius was not content with the simple acknowledgment of Nebuchadnezzar, but ordered that the God of Daniel should be feared and honoured in all parts of his dominion; and thus was he the means of preparing the way of his countrymen to the land of their fathers.

The period of Israel's captivity was now fast approaching the close. The manner in which Daniel is frequently named by his contemporary Ezekiel, shows the pride and reverence with which the whole nation looked up to their distinguished compatriot, the only ground of hope and consolation to the scattered exiles. Beyond the gloomy waste of the captivity, their Prophets had always opened a vista of long ages of more than their former happiness and glory; but to which, their restoration to their own rich and pleasant land was the first and preparatory promise. Jeremiah had limited the duration of the captivity to seventy years: he had evinced his confidence in the certainty of his own predictions, by one of the most remarkable examples of teaching by significant action, so common among the Hebrew Prophets. In the time of the greatest peril, he had purchased an estate at Anathoth, and concealed the title-deeds with the greatest care, in order that they might come to light, for the benefit of his posterity, after the restoration of the Hebrew polity; in which event he thus showed his own implicit reliance. When, therefore, they saw the storm bursting upon the haughty and oppressive Babylon, when the vast plains of Shinaar glittered with the hosts of the Medes and Persians, and Cyrus, the designated deliverer, appeared at their head; amid the wild tumults of the war, and the shrieks and lamentations of the captured city, the Jews, no doubt, were chanting, at least murmuring, in secret, the prophetic strains of Isaiah or Jeremiah, which described the fall of the son of the morning, the virgin daughter of Babylon sitting in the dust, the ceasing of the oppressor, the ruin of the golden city.*

The life of Daniel was now advanced "some steps into the glorious course of prophecy, which had been revealed to him. He had seen the breast and arms of silver succeed to the golden head of the image; he had seen the first beast give way to the second; he had seen with his own eyes the fated Cyrus of Isaiah's prophecy; and heard with his own ears his proclamation of deliverance to Israel, amid

* History of the Jews, vol. ii., p. 7. 12mo. London, 1830.

prayers, and tears, and blessings; he had bidden farewell to the first caravan of his returning countrymen. His eyes had seen the Lord's salvation, and he was calmly awaiting his dismissal to that heavenly Jerusalem, whose earthly type was denied to his eyes, now dim with the infirmity of near ninety years. Yet his country and his church occupied his unceasing care; and he felt much concern at the news of impediments which had already arisen within the first two years of his country's restoration. He had been mourning and fasting, on this account, for three whole weeks, when his final and crowning vision was vouchsafed to him. It was, indeed, a fit termination to the magnificent prospect which had been opened before him. Its approach was announced by an involuntary quaking, which seized on Daniel and his attendants. They fled and hid themselves, and Daniel was left alone, half dead with exceeding awe, to behold the fearful splendour of his visitant. It was no longer the angel Gabriel that now appeared; but his eyes beheld the glory of the Son of God, who showed himself to him, as he afterwards did to St. John, clad in the ensigns of his priestly office. A prophecy was then announced to him, which, starting from that moment, ran its course through successive ages, to the end of the world. Three grand periods were marked out by numbers, so that it exceeded all previous disclosures in certainty of application, no less than in magnificence and extent. How trifling would now appear to him those lets and hinderances which he had been bewailing! What news could effectually trouble him after the stupendous announcements of his glorious vision?

"The brightness of this vision could scarcely become dull before the Prophet breathed his last, and entered the holy region within that veil, behind which lay the substance of the shadows which he had been contemplating. His last days were such as befell no other of the Prophets before him. Isaiah and his contemporaries died amid the thickening gloom which portended the captivity of their country. They saw the beginning of the anguish, but not of the comfort, which they foretold. Jeremiah died with his melancholy song of rebuke in his mouth. Ezekiel appears not to have survived the captivity. But the life of Daniel was sufficiently long to include the captivity between Jerusalem still standing, and Jerusalem rebuilt. He saw the storm come on, and also go off. And, doubtless, from him many of his countrymen derived those lessons of patient faith, which supported them in the anxious vicissitudes of their resettlement. In another respect, also, his life differed from that of every other Prophet, excepting David. It was passed amid the splendour of a court, and in the ministration of secular power. But this, which has been objected to him by the narrow-minded and superstitious descendants of his countrymen, serves to give him greater claim to our admiration. To the man who finds a refuge from the temptations of society only in fleeing to inactive solitude, surely little praise can be awarded. He, probably, abandons a post in which he might benefit others, for that which, at best, can only benefit himself, and unprofitably lays up the talents which he had in charge to spend. Daniel did not so. He manfully stood, where God

had placed him, in the foremost rank, and maintained, with unbending uprightness, a situation of most perilous temptation. A heathen court surrounded the Jew with more than common calls of allurement from duty. His legal purity was in jeopardy every moment; and if he once gave way on this point, it was not easy to stop in his career of apostacy. Daniel maintained this point with the utmost jealousy, and with it his moral rectitude and spiritual fidelity. He might at any moment have retired from the weary toil of the perpetual struggle, and might thus have won the reputation of a holy and mortified hermit, instead of being excluded (as with David he has been) from the bright ranks of the canonical Prophets. But his notions of duty were not those of these wretched unpractical Doctors. He stood and fought at his proper post. He not only kept himself as undefiled by the world as the hermit, but, by active influence and public ministry, did essential service both to his country and to the church of God. Therefore, that glorious person whom he saw in vision, and the time of whose coming he so distinctly marked out, has assigned to him that rank which Rabbinical ignorance has denied. He that spake the parable of the talents, and rebuked the hypocritical self-mortifying notions of the Pharisees, pronounced Daniel to be a Prophet; and his beloved disciple built upon his prophecy, as upon a sure foundation, the glorious fabric of his Revelation. His prophecy, indeed, is not conveyed through the pleasing channel of poetry; neither does it contain the heart-stirring eloquence of exhortation, deprecation, and denunciation, which moves us so much in all the other Prophets, especially in the three greater; but he simply narrates his visions, of which his work is a prose history. But to what Prophet were such visions accorded? Assuredly, as long as the importance of prophecy shall be measured by its extent, by its clearness, by its magnificence, by its vital importance to the soul of man, the book of Daniel is the first among prophetic books, and Daniel the first among Prophets." *

Note A.—Page 73.

Nebuchadnezzar's golden colossus has been considered a stupid subject, because measured by false proportions: nevertheless, a proper understanding of the altitude and accompaniments of this image, may solve the difficulties which have been collected out of the description given of it: "It was an image of gold: its height threescore cubits; its breadth six cubits." (Dan. iii.) The learned Prideaux felt very strongly the embarrassment which arises from these dimensions: he expresses himself in these words:—

"This temple [of Belus] stood till the time of Xerxes; but he, on his return from the Grecian expedition, (Strabo, lib. xv., p. 738; Herodotus, lib. i.; Arrianus, *de Expeditione Alexandri*,) demolished the whole of it, and laid it all in rubbish, having first plundered it of all its immense riches, among which were several images or statues of massive gold, and one which is said by Diodorus Siculus (lib. ii.) to have been forty feet high,

* Scripture Biography. By the Rev. R. W. Evans, M.A. Second series, pp. 190—193. London, 1835.

which might perchance have been that which Nebuchadnezzar consecrated in the plains of Dura. Nebuchadnezzar's golden image is said, indeed, in Scripture, to have been sixty cubits, that is, ninety feet high; but that must be understood of the image and pedestal both together. For that image being stated to have been but six cubits broad, or thick, it is impossible that the image could have been sixty cubits high. For that makes its height to be ten times its breadth, or thickness, which exceeds all the proportions of a man; no man's height being above six times his thickness, measuring the slenderest man living at his waist. But where the breadth of this image was measured, is not said: perchance it was from shoulder to shoulder; and then the proportion of six cubits breadth will bring down the height exactly to the measure which Diodorus hath mentioned. For the usual height of a man being four and a half of his breadth between the shoulders, if the image were six cubits broad between the shoulders, it must, according to this proportion, have been twenty-seven cubits high, which is forty feet and a half. Besides, Diodorus (lib. ii.) tells us, that this image of forty feet high, contained a thousand Babylonish talents of gold; which, according to Pollux, who, in his *Onomasticon*, reckons a Babylonish talent to contain seven thousand Attic drachmas, that is, eight hundred and seventy-five ounces, this [according to the lowest computation, valuing an Attic drachm at no more than seven-pence half-penny; whereas Dr. Bernard reckons it to be eight-pence farthing, which would mount the sum much higher] amounts to three millions and a half of our money. But if we advance the height of the statue to ninety feet without the pedestal, it will increase the value to a sum incredible; and, therefore, it is necessary to take the pedestal also into the height mentioned by Daniel. Other images and sacred utensils were also in that temple, all of solid gold." (Prideaux's Connect., pp. 100, 101.)

The reader will perceive, that our learned author supposes the image itself to have been only forty feet high; while its pedestal was fifty feet high: a disproportion of parts, which, if not absolutely impossible, is utterly contradictory to every principle of science, even of the rudest; and *à fortiori* of the more refined periods. We have no instance of such disproportion remaining. The arts had long been cultivated in India, and in Egypt; and doubtless in Babylon also.

Let us hear the original authors. Herodotus, who saw the temple of Belus, is the best authority respecting it. "The temple of Jupiter Belus, whose huge gates of brass may still be seen, is a square building, each side of which is two furlongs. In the midst rises a tower, of the solid depth and height of one furlong; upon which, resting as upon a base, seven other lesser towers are built in regular succession. The ascent is on the outside; which, winding from the ground, is continued to the highest tower; and in the middle of the whole structure there is a convenient resting-place. In the last tower is a large chapel, in which is placed a couch, magnificently adorned, and near it a table of solid gold; but there is no statue in the place. In this temple there is also a small chapel, lower in the building, which contains a figure of Jupiter, in a sitting posture, with a large table before him: these, with the base of the table, and the seat of the throne, are all of the purest gold; and are estimated by the Chaldeans to be worth eight hundred talents. On the outside of this chapel are two altars; one is of gold, the other is of immense size, and appropriated to the sacrifice of full-grown animals; those, only, which have not yet left their dams, may be offered on the golden altar. On the larger altar, at the anniversary festival in honour of their god, the Chal-

deans regularly consume incense to the amount of a thousand talents. There was formerly in this temple a statue of solid gold, twelve cubits high: this, however, I mention, from the information of the Chaldeans, not from my own knowledge." (*Clio.* 183.)

Diodorus Siculus, a much later writer, speaks to this effect (lib. ii.): "Of the tower of Jupiter Belus, the historians who have spoken have given different descriptions; and this temple being now entirely destroyed, we cannot speak accurately respecting it. It was excessively high; constructed throughout with great care; built of brick and bitumen. Semiramis placed on the top of it three statues of massive gold, of Jupiter, Juno, and Rhea. Jupiter was erect, in the attitude of a man walking: he was forty feet in height, and weighed a thousand Babylonian talents. Rhea, who sat in a chariot of gold, was of the same weight. Juno, who stood upright, weighed eight hundred talents." Diodorus proceeds to mention many more articles of gold; among others, "a vast urn, placed before the statue of Jupiter, which weighed twelve hundred talents."

The reader will judge for himself respecting this extract: to us, it seems that the Babylonians, regretting exceedingly the loss of their sacred treasures from this temple, magnified both their value and their importance, when discoursing concerning them, to inquiring strangers. Diodorus acknowledges "he could not speak accurately respecting it." We rather adhere, generally, to the relation of Herodotus: at least in these particulars, 1. There was no statue in the highest chapel; but, 2. In another chapel there was a statue of Jupiter [Belus] sitting. 3. The worth, not the weight, was calculated at so many talents, that is, including the labour, skill, preparation, and accompaniments of the statue, its throne, &c. 4. The festival in honour of the god Belus was annual; and it was prodigious, since, no doubt, the other offerings corresponded to that of the incense; a thousand talents! 5. A statue of solid gold, of twelve cubits, (eighteen feet,) is mentioned by the historian as a thing barely credible; observe, of solid gold; yet a statue not solid, but an external shell of that metal, as statues are usually cast, might have been very much larger, at much less expense of gold. 6. We conclude, that Nebuchadnezzar consecrated his image at an anniversary festival in honour of his deity.

After stating these variations and embarrassments of conception and description, it will be thought desirable to obtain an idea of this image more accurately approaching its true appearance and dimensions.

In the first place, we assume that the taste for sculpture in those ages was pretty much the same throughout the East, in Babylon and in Egypt: so that, by what figures of equal antiquity now exist, in Egypt, for instance, we may estimate what was then adopted in Babylon, whose works of art have perished. Secondly, that Nebuchadnezzar, having conquered and ravaged Egypt, but a few years before this period, had undoubtedly seen there the colossal statues of that country, erected by its ancient Monarchs; and as these were esteemed not only sacred objects, but also capital exertions of art, we infer, that he proposed to imitate these, as to their magnitude, and to surpass them, as to their materials. These assumptions being admitted, we proceed to examine some of those *colossi* which still continue to ornament Egypt.

Note B.—Page 76.

Professor Eichorn has manifested a strong inclination to expel the Prophet Daniel from the sacred writings. As the difficulties which attend some representations in this Prophet, ("fires which do not burn, and an

image strangely disproportioned," are especially selected,) are among the Professor's principal reasons; we could wish, before sentence were passed on the delinquent, that the following hints in relation to some of his subjects, were duly weighed, and accurately understood.

The story of the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace would be much more within our comprehension, if we knew the true form of what is denominated a "furnace:" it is usually conceived of, as being somewhat like our tile-kilns, a solid, enclosed brick building, with an aperture only for entrance, or, at most, with a door-way below, and a vent above, for the flame, smoke, &c. But the circumstances of the story do not warrant an edifice of this construction; for it appears, that Nebuchadnezzar, still seated on his throne, saw the persons in the fire. Now this he could not do, through the solid wall of such a building; neither could the flame, issuing from a narrow orifice, easily slay those men who threw in the Hebrews; the solid wall being between them and the fire. Either, then, the opening to this furnace, if it were a solid edifice, was large enough to admit of full view into it; or we must seek some other construction for it. We may carry this idea somewhat farther, and infer the propriety of supposing Nebuchadnezzar to see throughout the structure: by consequence, the building had no covering; but was, at most, an enclosure of fire; or, an area surrounded by a wall, within which the fire raged. [Was this furnace made on purpose, *in terrorem?* or was it already established for the purposes of burning brick, or pottery of any kind; or was it any part of the furnace in which the image had been wrought? &c. These uncertainties greatly affect the history.]

We find no assistance from the nature or derivation of the Chaldee word (אתון *atun*) rendered "furnace:" it seems to signify "a place of fire;" but without ascertaining the form, extent, or nature of such a place. Neither is any farther illustration derivable from the apocryphal history of this miracle, which evidently labours to describe it in hyperbolical terms.

There is, however, a hint given by the apocryphal writer to this effect: "But the angel of the Lord descended and smote the flame of fire out of the furnace," (*καμινον*, "oven," in our rendering,) "and made the middle part of the furnace as if a moist, dewy, whistling wind" were passing over it. If there be any approximation to truth in this representation, then we must farther understand the construction of this furnace to be such as might admit a passage of air over it; which idea contributes essentially to determine against a close and solid building.

CHAPTER VI.

ANTIOCHUS THE GREAT.—*Seleucus Philopator—Antiochus Epiphanes—Accession of the latter to the Throne—His versatile and voluptuous Character—His Duplicity—Deposes Onias, at the Suggestion of Joshua—Who is raised to the Priesthood—He introduces the Customs of the Greeks with the Intention of discarding the Religion of the one true God—General religious Declension—The Temple spoliated—Murder of Onias—Which Murder is avenged by Antiochus—Menelaus in Difficulty—Attempts to carry off the Gold of the Temple, but is frustrated—Is universally detested—Rumour of the Death of Antiochus, and Rejoicings in Jerusalem on account thereof—Massacre in that City—The Roman Government interferes—Apollonius—Miserable Condition of Jerusalem—Persecution of the Jews by Antiochus—Who attempts to eradicate Judaism—Philip the Governor of the Province—Cruel Martyrdom of Eleazar—And of Salome and her Sons—Rise of Judas Maccabeus—Death of Antiochus.*

IN the year of the world 3815, Antiochus the Great was overcome by the Romans, and obliged to cede all his possessions beyond Mount Taurus, to give twenty hostages, among whom was his own son Antiochus, afterwards surnamed Epiphanes, and to pay a tribute of twelve thousand Euboic talents, each fourteen Roman pounds in weight. To defray these charges, he resolved to seize the treasures of the temple of Belus, at Elymais; but the people of that country, being informed of his design, surprised and destroyed him with the whole of his army. He left two sons, Seleucus Philopator, and Antiochus Epiphanes who succeeded him.

Seleucus being the elder brother, ascended the throne; and as Antiochus Epiphanes had continued a hostage at Rome for the space of fourteen years, he resolved to procure his return to Syria, and to send his own son, Demetrius, to Rome in his place. Whilst Antiochus was on his journey to Syria, he received intelligence of his brother's death, and forthwith assumed the reins of government. None ever grasped the sceptre of power with greater *eclât*. He was recognised as some propitious deity, who was to oppose the designs of the King of Egypt, who had long threatened to invade and subdue Syria; and hence he obtained the surname of Epiphanes, "the illustrious," or Epimanes, "the madman."

Antiochus united the quick and versatile character of a Greek with the splendid voluptuousness of an Asiatic. At one time he debased the royal dignity by mingling with the revels of his meanest subjects, scouring the streets in his riotous frolics, or visiting the lowest places of public entertainment, and the common baths; or, like Peter of Russia, conversing with the artisans in their shops on their various trades. With still less regard to the dignity of his own character, he was fond of mimicking in public the forms of election to the Roman magistracies; he would put on a white robe, and canvass the passengers in the streets for their votes. Then, supposing himself to have been elected *ædile*, or tribune, he would place his *curule* chair in the open market-place, and administer justice; a poor

revenge against a people, before whose power he trembled. On the other hand, the pleasures of Antiochus were those of a Sardanapalus; and his munificence, more particularly towards the religious ceremonies and edifices, both of his own dominions and of Greece, was on a scale of truly oriental grandeur; for among the discrepancies of this singular character must be reckoned a great degree of bigotry and religious intolerance. The admirers of the mild genius of the Christian religion, and those who suppose religious persecution unknown in the world till the era of Christianity, would do well to consider the wanton and barbarous attempt of Antiochus to exterminate the religion of the Jews, and substitute that of the Greeks. Yet the savage and tyrannical violence of Antiochus was, in fact, and surely we may say providentially, the safeguard of the Jewish nation from the greatest danger to which it had ever been exposed; the slow and secret encroachment of Grecian manners, Grecian arts, Grecian vices, and Grecian idolatry. It roused the dormant energy of the whole people, and united again, in indissoluble bonds, the generous desire of national independence, with zealous attachment to the national religion. It again identified the true patriot with the devout worshipper.*

Antiochus quickly turned his attention to Egypt, which was then governed by his nephew Ptolemy Philopator, son to his sister, Cleopatra, whom Antiochus the Great had married to Ptolemy Epiphanes, King of Egypt. He sent Apollonius, one of his officers, into Egypt, apparently to honour Ptolemy's coronation, but in reality to obtain intelligence whether the great men of the kingdom were inclined to place the government of Egypt in his hands, during the minority of the King, his nephew. (2 Macc. iv. 21, &c.) Apollonius, however, found them not disposed to favour his master, and this obliged Antiochus to make war against Philopator. In the mean time, Joshua, the brother of Onias III., the High Priest, afterwards called Jason, out of compliment to the Greeks, made Antiochus an offer of three hundred and fifty talents, if he would depose Onias from his office, and appoint him in his place. Insulting as the proposal was to Antiochus, he had the meanness and mercenary spirit to accept it. Joshua had well studied his man. His scheme was successful; he was raised to the pontificate; and Onias, whose continued residence in Jerusalem, on account of his character and popularity in the city, would prove a sharp thorn in the sides of the usurper, was banished to Antioch.

On his return to Jerusalem, Jason proceeded to strengthen his own interests by undermining the national character. Being immoderately fond of Grecian customs, he immediately began to introduce them among the Jews; he obtained permission to build a gymnasium, which attracted all the youth of the city; he also founded a college in which the youth were educated in the Grecian literature and manners; and thus weaned them by degrees from all the habits and opinions of their fathers. He procured from Antiochus the power of rewarding

* History of the Jews, vol. ii., p. 38.

those who distinguished themselves, with the freedom of Antioch. He subsequently sent some of these graduates to the Olympic games. He allowed the services of the temple to fall into disuse; and carried his alienation from the Jewish faith so far as to send a contribution to the great games, which were celebrated at Tyre, in honour of their tutelar deity, the Hercules of the Greeks. This last act of impiety was frustrated by the conscientious scruples of his messengers, who were not as yet prepared for a deed so flagrantly idolatrous, and, therefore, presented the money to be employed in the service of the Tyrian fleet. The ill-gotten booty of Jason was not long enjoyed. He sent to pay the accustomed tribute to Antioch, another Onias, (his own brother, according to Josephus, or the brother of Simon, the son of Joseph, according to the Book of Maccabees,) who, in conformity to the Grecian fashion, had assumed the name of Menelaus; and being ambitious to surpass his relative in acts of profligacy and crime, boldly offered to Antiochus double the sum given him by his brother, if he would again act the deposer, and confer the priesthood upon him. The unprincipled and shameless tyrant acceded to the request, and Menelaus returned to Jerusalem, holding the King's commission; but finding the adherents of Jason disposed to dispute his claim, he returned to Antioch, and informed the King that he and his followers had come to the resolution of conforming altogether to the Greek religion, who, flattered by the resolution, granted Menelaus a military escort, before which his opponents fled.

The spirit of true piety was confined to a very small party in Judea. The greater portion of the inhabitants were lovers of pleasure, and eagerly countenanced every innovation on the faith of Israel: many of the Priests were open apostates, and preferred the idolatrous exercises of Heathenism, to the services of the Lord's house. The attempts, therefore, of Menelaus to establish the idolatrous rites of the Syrians, were cordially hailed by many, while the great mass of the people looked on with a stoical indifference. A few there were, "who faith preferred, and piety to God." The more virtuous of the Zadikim and the Pharisees viewed these proceedings with grief and indignation. The great teachers of the law and of the traditions were not at this time confined to the priesthood; and now that the reflecting part of the community witnessed the fearful corruption of manners betrayed by the Priests in general, and the venal and scandalous means by which the Pontiffs obtained their dignity, they transferred their confidence and veneration to the apparently devout, and certainly more zealous, advocates of Judaism. By this means, also, the worship of the synagogue spread itself more over the country, and gradually came under the control of the Scribes and Doctors of the law; whilst those of the teachers who claimed to be depositaries and interpreters of the oral traditions, acquired an immense influence over the minds of their hearers, to whom they became the casuists and confessors; and their *dictum* was considered equally authoritative as the law. By this means was the providence of God

preparing a number of confessors to the truth, in the midst of great darkness and apostacy.*

"Menelaus soon got into difficulty. For, having neglected to pay the tribute, he was summoned to Antioch to explain; and from thence he wrote to another brother, Lysimachus, whom he had left in charge of his affairs at Jerusalem, to forward to him some of the golden vessels of the temple; by the sale of which he paid his arrears, and had a large surplus remaining. But the transaction coming to the knowledge of the banished Onias, who resided at Antioch, he denounced it to the other Jews, who, one and all, reprobated the sacrilege. In order to avert the danger which threatened him, Menelaus, in the absence of Antiochus, applied to his viceroy, Andronicus, and by bribery induced him privately to murder the upright, but unfortunate, Onias. The baseness and treachery of this act excited general abhorrence, both among the Syrians and Jews, by which even Antiochus himself was so much affected, that, on his return to his capital, he caused Andronicus to be stripped of the purple, and put to death, with every mark of infamy, on the spot where the bloody deed had been perpetrated. But it was a solitary impulse of virtuous indignation in the King. The turn of Menelaus came, and he was called on to defend himself; and, seeing no chance of escape from his perilous situation but by bribery and intrigue, he wrote to Lysimachus for another supply of gold; and he, being on this occasion more jealously watched, was surprised by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, whilst engaged in packing up a second freight of valuables; and, notwithstanding he was surrounded by soldiers, was slain in the treasury. At the time appointed for the trial of Menelaus, the Jews deputed three of the most respectable members of their Sanhedrim, to repair to Tyre, where the cause was heard, for the twofold purpose of explaining the death of Lysimachus, and of accusing Menelaus. The case was so clear on behalf of the deputies, that Menelaus was convicted; but Antiochus, being at this crisis influenced by the promise of a bribe, tendered him through a favourite whom Menelaus had secured, was vile enough to reverse what he had done, and, acquitting the guilty Menelaus, put the three innocent deputies to death. The Tyrians showed their sense of the result, by giving to the bodies of the murdered delegates an honourable funeral."† The news of this tragedy speedily reached Jerusalem, and filled the city with consternation and despair.

Antiochus had commenced his campaign for the subjugation of Egypt. In the mean time, a false report had reached Palestine, that he had fallen before the walls of Alexandria. Antiochus, being informed that there had been great demonstrations of joy among the Jews on that intelligence, hastened to Jerusalem in a state of great exasperation, the gates were thrown open to him by the partisans of Menelaus, and the city was doomed to three days' massacre and pillage, during which forty thousand individuals were slain, and an almost equal number sold into slavery. The abandoned Menelaus

* Brooks's History of the Hebrew Nation, pp. 333, 334. † Ibid., p. 335.

conducted the tyrant into the temple, where the plunder which had been commenced by the pontifical caitiff, was completed. The aggressions of Antiochus were soon after arrested by the Roman government, and he was sternly forbidden to pursue his hostilities in Egypt, which led to the Jews experiencing the effects of his mortification. The year following, he sent Apollonius into Judea with an army of twenty-two thousand men, who, concealing his designs, and being quietly admitted into Jerusalem, remained inactive until the following Sabbath, when he suddenly fell upon the Jews, whilst engaged in worship or repose; he slew all he could find, and sold the women and children into captivity, according to the instructions which Antiochus had given him. (2 Macc. v. 23—26.) He then surrendered the city to pillage, and subsequently set it on fire, and demolished the walls. The temple, probably from its isolated situation, escaped the flames. Apollonius built a strong fortress, called Acra, on the highest part of Mount Sion, which commanded the city and the temple, from whence he harassed all the people of the country, who might steal in with fond attachment to visit the ruins, or to offer a hasty and interrupted service in the house where their fathers worshipped. The voice of adoration was no longer heard in the holy city; the rude and boisterous orgies of Heathenism alone disturbed the deathless quiet, and the unavailing screams and cries for help from those who had ventured forth from their hiding-places.

The rage of their persecutor did not terminate here. Antiochus, apprehending that the Jews would never be faithful in their vassalage to him, unless he obliged them to change their religion, issued an edict, enjoining them to conform to the laws of the Greeks, and forbade the usual sacrifices in the temple, their festivals and their Sabbath; he also despatched officers into all parts, to enforce rigid compliance with the decree. Athenæus, a bitter enemy of the Jews, who was well acquainted with their customs, and a thorough miscreant, was the Commissioner for Judea. The temple at Jerusalem was dedicated to Jupiter Olympius, whose statue was erected on the altar of burnt-offering; and thus the abomination of desolation was seen in the temple of God.* He commanded a great sow to be sacrificed, part of the flesh to be boiled, and the liquor of the unclean animal to be sprinkled over every part of the temple; and thus did he desecrate with the most odious defilement the sacred place, which the Jews had considered for centuries the most holy spot in the universe. Altars and images were erected in the streets of Jerusalem, and throughout Judea, where the people were compelled to offer sacrifice of forbidden meats, or to be put to death. Some women, who were discovered to have circumcised their children, were paraded about the city, with their little ones suspended by the legs to their necks; they were hung in a conspicuous part, and then thrown over

* By the term "abomination of desolation standing in the Holy Place," the Roman eagles, or standards, are generally understood; for these, being objects of worship to the Romans, were an abomination, that is, idolatrous: and wherever the armies which bore them came, they inflicted desolation. At one time it was customary for the Roman Governors to respect the scruples of the Jews; and when they came up to Jerusalem, to leave the eagles of their guard behind at Cæsarea.

the battlements of the castle. All the copies of the law were to be immediately given up, and publicly burnt: whosoever was found guilty of concealing the sacred volume, was immediately put to death. From Jerusalem, the persecution spread throughout the country: in every city the same barbarities were perpetrated, the same professions introduced; and, as a final insult to the majesty of an offended God, the feasts of the Bacchanalia, the licence of which, as they were celebrated in the later ages of Greece, shocked the severe virtue of the older Romans, were substituted for the national festival of the tabernacles. The reluctant Jews were forced to join in those riotous and obscene orgies, and to carry the ivy, the emblem of the god. So near was the Jewish nation, and the worship of Jehovah, to total extermination!

Many of the devoted Jews preferred martyrdom to sin. The majority of them withdrew to the caves and fastnesses of Judea, and in secret engaged in acts of solemn worship. A thousand of these were surprised by Philip the Governor of the province, in a large cavern near Jerusalem, engaged in worship on the Sabbath-day. Disposed to proceed gently with them, he promised them life, if they would apostatize; but, being emboldened, and not intimidated, by a sense of danger, they again were found assembled on the Sabbath-day: they were forthwith surrounded by Philip, and all put to the sword.

Antiochus was now resolved to direct the persecution with increased vigour, and came himself to Jerusalem. The first victim of his cruelty was Eleazar, who had attained to the venerable age of ninety, was a Scribe of true piety, and who had, by his instruction of others, strengthened many to endure. He was brought before the multitude on a public stage, in order that he might be compelled to eat swine's flesh; but though it was thrust into his mouth with brutal violence, he resolutely refused to swallow it. The soldiers who stood around him, with some feelings of shame and commiseration, suggested that he might eat publicly some other food of his providing, which would probably satisfy the King, and deceive the people; but the hoary-headed martyr gave them meekly to understand, that such an example would be equally calculated to make them stumble, while the dissimulation would be highly offensive to God. He was then led away to execution: the soldiers who had before pitied, now upbraided him for obstinacy and pride. When he was ready to die with stripes, he groaned, and said, "It is manifest unto the Lord, that hath the holy knowledge, that whereas I might have been delivered from death, I now endure sore pains in body by being beaten, but in soul am well content to suffer these things, because I fear him." And thus this man died, leaving his death for an example of a noble courage, and a memorial of virtue, not only unto the young, but unto all his nation. (2 Macc. vi. 30, 31.)

There were also brought before the tribunal of Antiochus, seven sons and their mother,* who was very old, by a strong body of armed

* The name generally given to this lady, is Salome. The book entitled, "The Government of Reason," attributed to Josephus, does not name her. The Greeks, in their calendar, designate her Salome. Ben Gorion calls her Anne; others name her Maccabæa. Erasmus, in his paraphrase on the "Government of Reason," recognises her as Salome.

men, and commanded to eat of swine's flesh, and meats offered to idols, upon pain of torture in case of a refusal. The men, from the symmetry of their form, and elegance of their deportment, attracted his notice; and, therefore, after beholding them with a sort of approbation, he thus accosted them :—

"I invite you to comply with me, under an assurance of my particular friendship; for I have it in my power to oblige and advance them that obey me, in as eminent a manner as I have to punish those who withstand my commands. Be assured, then, you shall not fail of preferment, but have places of honour and profit under me, provided you will renounce your country's customs, and be content to live after the Greek manner; but I assure you, that in case of disobedience, you have nothing to expect but racks and torture, fire and death."

The tyrant had no sooner thus spoken, than he commanded the instruments of torture to be produced, in order to work the more strongly on their fears. When the guards had set before the brethren the wheels, racks, manacles, combustible matter, and other instruments of horror and execution, Antiochus, taking advantage of the impression he supposed this spectacle would make, once more applied to them to this effect: "Young men, consider the consequences: your compliance is no longer a wilful offence; you may rest assured, that the Deity you worship will consider your case, in being compelled to violate your law." But they were so far from being terrified at the consequences of a refusal, that their resolutions became stronger; and through the power of reason, aided by religion, they secretly triumphed over his barbarity.

These intrepid youths, exulting in the magnanimity of their conduct, made Antiochus the following reply :—"To what purpose, O King, is this delay? If with design to know our final resolution, be assured we are ready to encounter death in its most frightful forms, rather than transgress the laws of our forefathers; for, besides the reverence due to their example on other accounts, this is what our obedience to the law, and the precepts of Moses, particularly require from us. Do not, then, attempt any more to persuade us to apostacy; do not put on a counterfeit pity for those who know you hate them: even death itself is more supportable than such an insulting, dissembling compassion as would save our lives with the loss of our innocence. Try us, therefore, and see if it be in your power to destroy our souls, when we suffer in the cause of God and religion. Your cruelty cannot hurt us; for all the effect our pains can have will be to secure us the glorious rewards due to unshaken patience and injured virtue."

The tyrant, enraged at their contumacy, gave the word of command, and the guards immediately brought forth the *eldest* of the seven brethren; and having torn off his garment, and tied his hands behind, cruelly scourged him; and continued their lashes till they were tired; but it availed nothing. They then put him on the wheel, where, his body being extended, he underwent the severest tortures of the rack. They then put fire under him, and exposed his body,

as much extended as possible, to the devouring flames, insomuch that he exhibited a spectacle horrible beyond description; and this continued until nothing was left of the human form but a skeleton of broken bones. This brave youth was not heard to utter a single groan: he bore his torments with invincible fortitude, as if he had been translated to immutability in the midst of the flames.

The guards now advanced with the *second* brother, and fixed his hands in manacles of iron; but before they put him to the rack, they demanded if he would accept the conditions. Finding by his reply that he possessed the same resolution as his brother, they tore off his flesh with pincers, and flayed the skin off his face and head. He bore his torture with singular magnanimity, saying, "How welcome is death in any form, when we suffer for our religion and laws!"

The *third* brother was next produced, and pressed with arguments and entreaties to preserve life. But he nobly replied, with some vehemence, "Are you ignorant that I am the son of the same father, and the same mother, with those that went before me? Shall I, then, at this awful period renounce the honour of that alliance? The same institutions were taught us all; and I will abide by them while I breathe." The freedom of this speech enraged the executioners, who, to express their malice and resentment, stretched his hands and his feet on the engine, and broke them to pieces; but when they found it did not deprive him of life, they drew off his skin at the ends of his fingers, and flayed him from the very crown of the head. Not content with mangling his body in this merciless manner, they dragged him to the wheel; where, being yet more distended, his flesh was torn away, and streams of blood gushed forth, till at last he expired.

The guards now produced the *fourth* brother, whom they persuaded to bethink himself, and be wiser than those who had gone before him. But his answer was, "Your fire has not heat enough in it to make me renounce my opinion. I solemnly vow I will not renounce the truth." Antiochus, on hearing these words, was so excessively enraged, that he gave immediate orders to have his tongue cut out; whereupon the intrepid youth thus proceeded, "You may deprive me of the instrument of utterance; but that God who seeth the heart knows the inward sensations of the silent. Here is the member: you cannot by this act deprive me of reason. O that I could lose my life by inches to support the cause of religion! Though you take away the tongue, which chants the praises of God, remember that his high hand will very soon let its vengeance fall down on your guilty head!"

When this brother, quite exhausted with pain, and miserably mangled, had resigned his breath, the *fifth* instantly sprang forward of his own accord, exclaiming, "Prepare your torments! I am here ready to suffer the worst you can inflict. I come voluntarily to die in the cause of virtue. What have I done, wherein have I transgressed, to deserve this merciless treatment? Do we not worship the universal Parent of nature, according to his own decrees? Do we not act in conformity to the institution of his most holy law? These

are truths that ought to meet with reward, instead of punishment." While these words were in his mouth, the tormentors bound and dragged him to the wheel; to which fastening his knees with iron rings, they stretched him round the engine, and then broke his joints. Thus, after undergoing similar torments with his heroic brothers, he expired.

The *sixth* youth was then brought before Antiochus; and, being asked by the tyrant whether he would accept deliverance on the terms aforementioned, resolutely answered, "It is true, indeed, I am younger than my brothers; but my mind is as firm as theirs was. We had all of us the same parents, and the same instructions; and it is but necessary that we should all die alike for them: therefore, if you are determined to put me to the torment on my refusal to eat, torment me at once!" Hereupon they fastened him to the wheel; and having broken his bones, put fire under him; the guards then heated their spears, and thrust them into his back and sides, till his very entrails were burnt up. In the midst of these torments he exclaimed, "O glorious conflict, in which so many brethren have engaged so victoriously for the sake of their religion! I will accompany my brothers, and, relying on my God as my defence, cheerfully submit to death."

The sixth brother was at length despatched, by being thrown into a boiling caldron. When the *seventh* and youngest appeared, fettered and pinioned, the tyrant's heart began to relent. Calling upon him, therefore, to approach the tribunal, he endeavoured to soothe him. "You see what horrid kinds of death your brothers have undergone; but their disobedience and contumacy have been the sole cause of all the torments and cruelties they have sustained. Yet you, if you obey not my commands, shall be exposed to the same, nay, worse, torments, and so suffer a premature death; but if you comply with my desires, I will take you into the number of my friends." Not content with these persuasions, he addressed himself to the mother, with a seeming compassion for her loss, entreating her to prevail upon her child, in pity to her at least, to save this small remnant of her family. But his mother addressed him in the Hebrew tongue, and exhorted him to suffer. Upon this he suddenly exclaimed, "Take off my fetters; for I have something to communicate to the King, and all his friends." The King and his nobles, hearing this promise, seemed greatly rejoiced, and his chains were immediately knocked off. Taking the advantage of this circumstance, he thus exclaimed:—

"Tyrant! have you no fears nor apprehensions in your mind, after having received at the hands of the Almighty the kingdom and riches you enjoy, than to put to death his servants, and torment his worshippers? Is your conscience touched with no scruples, thus to deprive of their tongues those who share alike the same nature and passions with you? My brothers have undergone a glorious death, and shown how much their piety and uprightness were for the honour of the true religion. For this reason I will suffer death; and in my last pangs discover how much my desire was to follow the brave

example of my brothers. I beg and entreat the God of my fathers, that he would be propitious and merciful to our nation." Having finished his address, he committed himself to the boiling caldron, and expired.

The dauntless mother of these young men, after being scourged and otherwise severely tortured by order of Antiochus, finished her existence by surrendering herself to the flames.

A termination to the tyrannical and impious proceedings of Antiochus was fast approaching. One of his myrmidons, named Apelles, was commissioned to visit Modin, (the modern Sobah,) a small town on the sea-coast, and the birth-place of an aged Priest, called Mattathias, to which he had retired with his family from the impending storm, and to compel the inhabitants to conform to the Greek religion. An apostate Jew, at the bidding of Apelles, came forward to set the example by offering sacrifice. Mattathias, instigated by a holy zeal, like another Phinehas, instantly struck him dead; and his sons at the same time attacking Apelles and his followers, slew them all, and then pulled down the idolatrous altar. The standard of insurrection was forthwith erected, and great success followed. On the death of Mattathias, who through age and infirmities sank under the toils and excitement of the crisis, Judas, his third son, afterwards called Maccabeus, assumed the command.*

The deliverance of this afflicted and oppressed people from this monster in human form, ere long took place. That the death of Antiochus was miserable, both the Jewish and Roman historians agree. He had been defeated in an assault on a rich and magnificent temple in Persia, called by the Greeks that of Diana; perhaps of the female Mithra, or "the moon." Whether he were induced to take this aggressive step from a desire of plunder, or from what other cause, does not appear; but at this juncture the intelligence of the successes of Judas reached him, and he immediately hastened from Persia to Antioch in a complete rage, breathing threatening and slaughter. He was seized on the road with an incurable and offensive disease, and died at a small town called Paretacene. Polybius the historian says, "His mind was agitated by remorse for his outrages on the Persian temples." The authors of the books of the Maccabees say, "For his horrible barbarities and sacrilege in Judea."

* Some say he was so called from the Hebrew word מקבי which signifies, "the hammerer." Others derive the name from the abbreviated form of the motto adopted on his banner: *Mi camo-ca Baalim, Jehovah?* "Who is like unto thee among the gods, O Jehovah?"

BOOK II.

OF THE PERSECUTIONS RECORDED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER I.

SECT. I. MASSACRE OF THE INFANTS.—*Herod the Great, his Character—Aretas—Phasælus—Herod ingratiates himself with Cassius, for whom he procures a Tribute—His ambitious Projects viewed with Jealousy—Antigonus—Duplicity of Herod—He is alarmed at the Appearance of the "Star"—The wise Men—Herod's dark and bloody Project—Is deceived by the Magi—The Effects of his Rage—Silence of Josephus—Absurd Notion of Voltaire—Remarks of Dr. Lardner—Herod's sanguinary Character—His murderous Intentions when on his Death-Bed—How frustrated—Confirmation of Matthew's Testimony by Justin Martyr—Origen—The Toldoth Jeshu—Macrobius—Remarks.* SECT. II. MARTYRDOM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.—*Developement of the Scheme of Redemption—Prediction concerning John—His History—Zacharias—His unbelief and Punishment—Birth of John—Events which transpired in early Life—His public Appearance—Manner of Life—The Wildernesses of Judea—Prophecy and its Fulfilment—The Dispensation of John—Character of his Ministry—It resembled that of the ancient Prophets—Effects of his Ministry—Pharisees and Sadducees—Their erroneous Expectations of John—Causes thereof—He reproves the incestuous Herod—Is imprisoned—The Indignation of his Paramour, Herodias—Who resolves to seek his Life—The King's Birth-Day—Salome—Dancing—Promises her an unlimited Reward—Instructed by her Mother, she demands the Head of John—Herod's Hypocrisy respecting the Sacredness of an Oath—John is murdered—Review of his Career.*

SECT. I. MASSACRE OF THE INFANTS.

THIS act, however barbarous, was quite accordant with the malignant character of the perpetrator. Herod was the son of Antipater, the Idumean, one of the chief friends of Hyrcanus, and distinguished no less for his turbulent and seditious temper, than for his wealth. The times were favourable to men of such a character; and, while he obtained universal sovereignty over his native province of Idumea, he contrived to make Hyrcanus so subservient to his will, as to induce him to form an alliance with Aretas, King of the Arabians, from which he trusted to secure means to effect his own aggrandisement. Having so far accomplished his designs as to ingratiate himself with Rome, he obtained for his son Phasælus the governorship of Jerusalem, and for Herod, then only fifteen years of age, the chief command in Galilee.

In the events which followed the death of Cæsar, Herod found numerous opportunities of extending his ambitious projects. By collecting a considerable tribute for Cassius in Galilee, he obtained the friendship of that General, and was appointed to the command of the army in Syria. No less successful with Marc Antony, he overcame

THE MURDER OF THE INNOCENTS.

the powerful enemies who represented the dangerous nature of his ambitious views; and was exalted, with his brother Phasælus, to the dignity of Tetrarch of Judea. They had not, however, long enjoyed their office, when the approach of Antigonus toward Jerusalem compelled them to meditate immediate flight. Phasælus and Hyrcanus fell into the hands of the enemy; but Herod, making good his escape, hastened to Rome, where he pleaded his cause, and his former merits, with so much skill, that he was solemnly proclaimed King of the Jews, and endowed with the proper ensigns and rights of royalty. Augustus, three years afterwards, confirmed this act of the senate; and Herod scrupled not to commit the most horrible crimes to give further stability to his throne.

The King, knowing how much he was detested by the Jews, gave full scope to the exercise and display of his sanguinary temper. He had obtained the kingdom by great crimes, and by the shedding of much blood: he was therefore easily alarmed by any remarkable appearance; and the fact that a star had been seen, and that it was regarded as a proof that the King of the Jews was born, greatly alarmed him, anticipating that his short, but tyrannical, career would soon be terminated. Brooding over dark and malignant designs, he secretly summoned the "wise men," the philosophers and Priests, the learned of the eastern nations who were devoted to the study of astronomy, religion, and medicine, in order to ascertain the precise time that the star appeared; and as he imagined the exhibition would take place precisely at the time of his birth, he could then ascertain the exact age of the children, and arrange accordingly. All this was done under the cloak of religion, that he might not excite suspicion. But the Most High discovers his intention; and although men may be deceived, God cannot.

The "wise men," being commanded to visit Bethlehem, that they might see the new-born King, and communicate the news to Herod, were guided to the precise spot by the luminous meteor. Had they, however, complied with the instructions of their King, and given him exact information where "he that is born King of the Jews" might be found, it would have been easy for the jealous Monarch to have commissioned one of those myrmidons of blood by whom he was constantly surrounded, to slay him; but by a dream they were divinely assured that they ought not to return to Herod; and an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, directing him to flee into Egypt with Mary and the young child, and there to remain until the storm was overpast.

Herod was now in a perfect rage. Deceived by the wise men not returning as he had expected, he plotted the destruction of the babe of Bethlehem in another way. He "sent and slew all the male children in Bethlehem, and in all its borders, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had accurately inquired of the wise men." He probably intended to send an executioner, and kill Jesus alone; but having been "mocked," he resolved to accomplish the barbarous project in a way which was the most likely to succeed. Therefore, to make "assurance doubly sure," he sent forth and put all the children in the place to death. Such is an illustration of the

awful influence of wickedness and anger! Nothing can present a successful barrier against it. If it cannot achieve what it contemplates, it does not hesitate to go farther, and to accomplish much more evil, than was at first designed. He who possesses a depraved heart, and is the slave of angry passions, knows not the end of his tumultuous and maddened proceedings! The design of Herod was to cut off him that had been born King of the Jews: his purpose, therefore, did not require that he should put to death the female children; the male only were the sufferers; and this he effected throughout all the coasts thereof; that is, in all the adjacent places, the settlements or hamlets around Bethlehem, "from two years old and under." He supposed he knew the age of the predicted child. He had endeavoured to ascertain the time of his birth; and therefore slew all that were born about the time when the star appeared, perhaps from six months old to two years. The extending of the massacre to children of the latter age, when infants only of the last year might have sufficed, seems to have arisen from excess of precaution, to compass more surely the destruction of Christ within this wider limit, by including all that were under it.

Josephus has not noticed this massacre. It might, perhaps, have not been considerable enough to have attracted his attention; Bethlehem being but a small village, and its environs not extensive. Voltaire, either from ignorance or dishonesty, asserts that fourteen thousand children must have lost their lives in this murderous assault. If this were true, the silence of Josephus would be a very important objection to the veracity of St. Matthew's narrative; and with this view, doubtless, the assertion is made by the philosopher, who every where shows himself an inveterate enemy of revealed, and not unfrequently of natural, religion. But as the children whom Herod caused to be put to death were only males of two years old, and under, it is obvious, according to Voltaire's statement, that more children must have been born annually in the village of Bethlehem, than there are either in Paris or London. Further, as Bethlehem was a very small place, scarcely two thousand persons in it and its dependent districts, consequently, in the massacre not more than fifty at most could be slain.*

It has also been stated, that if there had been so cruel a slaughter made by Herod, of innocent infants at Bethlehem, a place not far from Jerusalem, it is very unlikely it should have been omitted by Josephus, who has written the history of the Jews, and particularly of the reign of Herod.

To this, Dr. Lardner replies in an elaborate manner: he says, 1. The most exact and diligent historians have omitted many events that happened within the compass of those times of which they undertook to write; nor does the reputation which any one historian has for exactness, invalidate the credit of another who seems to be well-informed of the facts he relates. Suetonius, Tacitus, and Dio Cassius, have all three written of the age of Tiberius; but it is no

* Townsend's New Testament arranged in Chronological and Historical Order. 8vo. vol. i., pp. 77, 78.

objection against the veracity of any one of them, that he has mentioned some things of that Emperor which have been omitted by the rest. No more is it any objection against St. Matthew that he has related an action of Herod not mentioned by Josephus. The Gospel of St. Matthew was published about the year of our Lord 38; at which time there doubtless were persons living who could, and, from the hostility then manifested against the Christian faith, who would, have contradicted his assertion, if it had been false or erroneous. Their silence is a tacit proof that the Evangelist has stated the fact correctly.

2. There have been as great cruelties committed by many eastern Princes; nor was there ever any man more likely than Herod to give the orders here mentioned by St. Matthew. When he had gained possession of Jerusalem * by the assistance of the Romans, and his rival Antigonus was taken prisoner, and in the hands of the Roman General, Sosius, and by him carried to Marc Antony, Herod, by a large sum of money, persuaded Antony to put him to death. Herod's great fear was, that Antigonus might some time revive his pretensions, as being of the Asmonean family. Aristobulus, the last of the Maccabæan family, was murdered by his directions at eighteen years of age, because the people of Jerusalem had shown some affection for his person.† In the seventh year of his reign, from the death of Antigonus, he put to death Hyrcanus, grandfather of Mariamne, then eighty years of age, who had saved Herod's life when he was prosecuted by the Sanhedrim; a man who, in his youth, and in the vigour of his life, and in all the revolutions of his fortune, had shown a mild and peaceable disposition.‡ His beloved wife, the beautiful and virtuous Mariamne, had a public execution; § and her mother Alexandra was put to death soon after.‖ Alexander and Aristobulus, his two sons by Mariamne, were strangled in prison by his order,¶ upon groundless suspicions, as it seems, when they were at man's estate.

In his last sickness, a little before he died, he issued an edict throughout Judea, requiring the presence of all the chief men of the nation at Jericho. His orders were obeyed; for they were enforced with no less penalty than that of death. When these men were come to Jericho, he had them all shut up in the Circus, and, calling for his sister Salome, and her husband Alexas, he told them, "My life is now but short: I know the dispositions of the Jewish people, and nothing will please them more than my death. You have these men in your custody: as soon as my breath is out of my body, and before my death can be known, do you let in the soldiers upon them, and kill them. All Judea, and every family there, will then, though unwillingly, mourn at my death."** Nay, Josephus says,†† "That with tears in

* Joseph. Antiq., lib. xiv., cap. xvi., sect. 4.
† Ibid., lib. xv., cap. iii., sect. 3.
‡ Ibid., lib. xv., cap. vi., sect. 3.
§ Ibid., lib. xv., cap. vii., sect. 5, 6.
‖ Ibid., sect. 8.
¶ Ibid., lib. xv., cap. xi., sect. 7.
** Joseph. Bell., lib. i., cap. xxx., sect. 6.
†† Joseph. Antiq., lib. xvii., cap. vi., sect. 5.

his eyes he conjured them, by their love to him, and their fidelity to God, not to fail of doing him this honour; and they promised they would not fail."

These commands were not executed; but, as an historian of great learning and candour observes, "The history of this his most wicked design takes off all objection against the truth of his murdering the Innocents, which may be made from the incredibility of so barbarous and horrid an act. For this thoroughly shows, that there can nothing be imagined so cruel, barbarous, and horrid, which this man was not capable of doing. In most of his actions, as described in history, may be read the character of a most bloody, cruel, and wicked tyrant; but in none more than in these two."*

The account of St. Matthew is abundantly confirmed by the testimony of ancient Christian authors. We select one from Justin Martyr, who flourished before the middle of the second century: "But," says he, "Herod, when the Arabian wise men did not come back to him, as he had desired them, but, according to a command given them, returned by another way into their own country; and when Joseph, together with Mary and the young child, were gone into Egypt, according to directions given to them also by a divine revelation; not knowing the child whom the wise men had come to worship, commanded all the children in Bethlehem, without exception, to be killed."† This tragical event is also mentioned by Irenæus, who lived in the same century;‡ and by Origen, who flourished in the third century, in his answer to Celsus, the Heathen, where he says, "Herod put to death all the little children in Bethlehem and its borders, with a design to destroy the King of the Jews, who had been born there."§ The fact is noticed in a rabbinical work, entitled, *Toldoth Jeshu,* in the following passage:—"And the King gave orders for putting to death every infant to be found in Bethlehem; and the King's messengers killed every infant, according to the royal order;"‖ and Macrobius, a Heathen, has also been supposed to corroborate the history. He flourished in the latter end of the fourth century; and, among other sayings which he records of Augustus, considerable notoriety has been given to the following:—"When the Roman had heard, that among the children within two years of age, which Herod the King of the Jews commanded to be slain, his own son had been killed, he said, 'It is better to be Herod's hog than his son,'"¶ alluding to the Jewish abhorrence of swine's flesh. Very little stress is laid upon this legendary tale. It meets with a place in ecclesiastical history, at a very remote period, while there is just reason to suppose, that Macrobius must have been mistaken with

* Prideaux's Connection of the Old and New Testament. Vol. ii., Part II., p. 655. 8vo. London, 1718.

† Justini Philosophi et Martyris Apologiæ Duæ, et Dialogus cum Tryphone Judæo. Cum Notis et Emendationibus Styani Thirlbii. Fol., p. 307. Londini, 1722.

‡ Iren. adv. Hæres., lib. iii., cap. 16.

§ Ὁ δ Ἡρωδης ανειλε παντα τα εν Βηθλεεμ και τοις οριοις αυτης παιδια, ὡς συναειρησων τον γεννηθεντα Ιουδαιων Βασιλεα.—Origen. *cont. Celsum.* Edit. Spenceri. 4to. lib. i., p. 47. Cantab. 1677.

‖ Sharpe's First Defence of Christianity, p. 40.

¶ Macrob. Sat., lib. ii., cap. 4.

respect to the origin of the jest. If Augustus passed this jest upon Herod, it was probably occasioned by the death of Antipater, or rather of Alexander and Aristobulus.

Be that as it may, no valid objection exists against the relation of St. Matthew: there is nothing improbable in it, considering the jealous, cruel temper of Herod. The silence of Josephus, or of the ancient Greek and Roman historians, can be no difficulty with any reasonable person. The fact is confirmed by the testimony of very early Christian writers, which the corroborative evidence of Macrobius tends to strengthen, because it shows that the event was not then contested, and that it was even better known than the fate of those sons of Herod, whom, Josephus says, he put to death at man's estate.* The sacred historian, in the simple statement he has given of the sanguinary transaction, does not attempt to add to the verisimilitude of his narrative, by any reference whatever to the public or private character of the tyrant. The inspired writers were cautious of speaking of the characters of wicked men. Here was one of the worst men in the world, committing one of the most awful crimes; and yet there is not a single mark of exclamation; not a single reference to any other part of his proceeding; nothing that could lead to the knowledge that his other conduct was not upright. There is no wanton and malignant *dragging* him into the history, that malice might be gratified, in making free with a bad character. What was to their purpose they record; what was not, they left to others. This is the nature of religion. It does not speak evil of others, except when necessary; nor then take pleasure therein.

SECT. II. MARTYRDOM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

It has been well observed, that "on turning from the Old Testament to the New, we are immediately struck with the wonderful manner in which God prepared the mind of man for his final blessing. The gradual opening of his glory to him through the means of prophecy, both as expressed by types and in words, is not the least remarkable part of this ceremony. It was singularly adapted both to excite, to maintain, and to reward, a lively faith. Every prediction, however near its first application may be, still proceeds onward towards the great end of all. Some march forward through time, with successive stages of brighter and clearer accomplishment. The denunciations against Jerusalem have not ceased with their two dreadful fulfilments. They are still active in the course which our Lord has assigned them, towards the judgment of the last day. Such intermediate accomplishments are like images reflected in a series of mirrors, one from another. The image in the furthest is faint, but at every successive and nearer mirror grows clearer and brighter, until at last it terminates in the original object. Thus, every age has had its light, and rejoiced in it. Thus, God has given breadth, comprehension, and compactness of unity, to our views, regarding his dealings with his

* Lardner's Credibility of Gospel History. Part I., Book II., chap. ii., sect. 1. Works, Vol. i. 8vo. London, 1831.

church, and has maintained that principle of the association of mind, which is so remarkably preserved throughout the structure of the scheme of redemption. Events fulfilled, leading us on from one to another, enable us to view with greater clearness what still remains unfulfilled; and characters, foreshadowed by characters, are more completely developed, and appear more striking. We no sooner open the Gospel, than we are presented with an example of this singular arrangement. John the Baptist appears as having been prefigured by Elijah. And so cherished was the prediction of that Prophet's re-appearance, that men were now anxiously looking out for him as the harbinger of the Messiah, in whom all their hopes terminated. The seventy weeks (Dan. ix. 24) stood at the very brim of fulfilment, and more fervent and more continual became the prayer to God, that he would hasten the kingdom of his elect by the advent of the promised Redeemer."*

It was after a prayer of this description, that John the Baptist made his appearance. In the Scriptures he bears the title of the "forerunner," or "messenger of the Lord."† The records of him, which the Gospels introduce, are dislocated and imperfect: enough, however, is vouchsafed to posterity, to show that he was a man of a lofty character, and that the relation in which he stood to Christianity was one of very high importance. His parents were Zacharias and Elizabeth, the latter "a cousin of Mary," the mother of Jesus, whose senior John was by a period of six months. Zacharias was a Priest of the course of Abia, whose duty it was to offer incense in the holy place. The precise spot where John entered into life, is not decisively determined. The Rabbins, with others, have fixed on Hebron, in the hill country of Judea, situated on an eminence, twenty miles southward from Jerusalem, and about twenty miles to the north from Beersheba. It was appointed a dwelling for the Priests, and declared one of the cities of refuge. (Joshua xxi. 13.) Others, Paulus, Kuinoel, and Meyer, after Reland, are in favour of Jetta, "a city of Judah." After the usual supplication had been officially presented, at that solemn and covenanted time of the offering of incense, the angel Gabriel, who had foreshown this advent to Daniel, appeared to Zacharias the Priest and offerer, and announced to him that his prayer had been heard; that his wife, now far advanced into years of age and sterility, should bring forth a son; and that he, "filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb," should go before the Lord in the power and spirit of Elijah, that is, in his *power* of conversion, and in his *spirit* of reproof, as prophesied by Malachi, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,‡ by promoting peace and harmony among men; and to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, implying the reception of the Gospel.

* Scripture Biography. By the Rev. Robert W. Evans, M.A. Pp. 194, 195. London, 1835.

† "Antecursor et præparator viarum Domini."—Tertull. *adv. Marc.*, lib. iv., cap. 33. Opera, tom. i., p. 509. Wirceb., 1780.

‡ See his conversion of the people of Israel from *Baal*, 1 Kings xviii. 21—40; his reproofs of *Ahab*, 1 Kings xviii. 17, 18; xxi. 20—29; of Ahaziah, 2 Kings i. 16, 17.

Zacharias is slow to credit these tidings, and querulously demands some evidence in token of their truth. The case of Abraham and Sarah, to whom a son Isaac was promised under similar circumstances, ought to have instructed him: he was punished in the sign which he required, which was inflicted on account of his want of faith: he was struck dumb by the angel until the accomplishment of the promise, and the circumcision of his son, when his speech was restored to him at the naming of the child; he was also inspired to utter that admirable and prophetic hymn, praising God for the promised redemption of Israel, by that Horn of Salvation, Christ, of the house of David, foretold by the mouth of God's holy Prophets, from the beginning of the world, in the Seed of the woman; and styling John a Prophet of the Most High, and a harbinger of Christ. Six months subsequent to this event, Elizabeth received a visit from Mary, the maternal parent of Jesus. On being saluted by her relation, Elizabeth felt her babe leap in her womb, and, being filled with the Spirit, broke forth into a poetic congratulation of Mary, as the destined mother of the Lord. At length, Elizabeth brought forth a son, whom her relations were anxious to name Zacharias, after his father: to this she objected, and preferred the name of John. Zacharias was consulted, who signified in writing that he should be called John. The education of the child was suitable to the office which he had to fill. He was brought up, like Samuel, as a Nazarite. According to the rule to which he was thus bound, he was to abstain from wine and all fermented liquors, and to keep himself holy all his days, unto the Lord. Hence it is said, "The hand of the Lord was with him." (Luke i. 66.) How deeply his father felt the responsibility resting upon himself, appears from the following part of the song to which he gave utterance: "And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to guide our feet into the way of peace." The sacred historian further adds, that "He was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel."* (Luke i. 76—80.)

The Emperor Tiberius, if we reckon from the period of his being made colleague with Augustus in the empire, had swayed the sceptre fifteen years when John made his public appearance, exhibiting the austerity, the costume, (2 Kings i. 8; Zech. xiii. 4,) and the manner of life, of the ancient Jewish Prophets. It were easy to show that he came at the precise time which had been foretold: the sceptre was departing from Judah; the seventy weeks of Daniel were

* The apocryphal *Protev. Jac.*, chap. xxii., states, that his mother, in order to rescue her son from the murder of the children at Bethlehem which Herod commanded, fled with him into the desert. She found no place of refuge: the mountain opened at her request, and gave the needed shelter in its bosom. Zacharias, being questioned by Herod as to where his son was to be found, and refusing to answer, was slain by the tyrant. At a later period Elizabeth died, when angels took the youth under their care. (*Fabricus, Cod. Apocrypha*, p. 117, *et seq.* Comp. Kuhn. Leben Jesu, i. 163. Remark 4.) Kitto, Cyclopedia.

expiring, and many were waiting for the consolation of Israel, when John appeared to declare, that the promised Deliverer of the church, and Desire of all nations, was at hand, and that "the Lord whom they sought, would suddenly come to his temple." At a fitting time he left the paternal roof, and embraced a desert life, which was to be the place of his training, and the stage on which he was first to appear. Here he observed the most rigid austerity. He was clothed with a rough garment, composed of camels' hair, bound by a leathern belt. This was not the fine hair of the camel from which our elegant cloth is made, called *camlet*, nor the more costly stuff, brought from the East Indies, under the name of camels' hair, but the long shaggy hair of the animal, from which a coarse cheap cloth is made, still worn by the poorer classes of the East, and by Monks. He subsisted, also, on such food as the wilderness afforded. "His meat was locusts." These were the food of the common people. Among the Greeks, the lowest orders used them; and the fact that John made his food of them, is indicative of his poverty and self-denying life. The historian informs us, that he partook also of "wild honey," found in the rocks and trunks of trees. Palestine was often called the land flowing with milk and honey. (Exod. iii. 8, 17; xiii. 5.)* The wilderness, which was the scene of John's labours, comprehended the mountains and part of the plain along the Jordan, and also the hill-country south of Jerusalem. In this part, at Hebron, John was brought up, but retired, before he opened his commission, to the neighbouring wilderness, probably of Ziph, or Maon. He first taught in that district, and then towards the Jordan, a tract sufficiently desert, yet with a great resort of people, and near large cities. The wildernesses of Canaan were not in every part without towns or cities.

The mission of John, as the harbinger of our Lord, exhibits an instance of the fulfilment of those prophecies to which Matthew, as writing first especially to the Jews, directed their attention more frequently than the other Evangelists. At the same time, the accomplishment of a prophecy which borrows its terms from the magnificence of Eastern Monarchs, (who were preceded by heralds,† and before whom valleys were exalted, and hills levelled,) in a manner so manifestly spiritual, and turns the attention so absolutely from external to moral grandeur, sufficiently reproves those who contend too strenuously for the literal accomplishment of the sayings of the

* "I was informed of one whose name was Banus, that lived in the desert, who used no other clothing than grew upon the trees, and had no other food than what grew of its own accord, and bathed himself with cold water frequently, both by night and by day, in order to preserve his chastity: I imitated him in those things, and continued with him three years." (Life of Josephus prefixed to his Works. Vol. i., p. 2. Edit. London, 1825.)

† In illustration of the allusion to the practice of Eastern Monarchs, to send pioneers to prepare the roads, open the passes, and remove impediments in the rough and desert countries, through which they were to travel with their pompous retinues, we mention the case of Semiramis, Queen of Assyria, in her royal expeditions into Media and Persia, and the other countries of Asia subject to her dominions, who, wherever she went, ordered mountains and precipices to be levelled, raised causeways in the low-countries, and by great cost and trouble made straight, short, and commodious highways, through places impassable before. (Diodorus Siculus, lib. ii.)

ancient Prophets, and thereby often fall into a Jewish mode of interpreting them. Prophecy has its peculiar imagery, its own appropriate dress of metaphor and allegory, which must not be overlooked. Here, the Monarch is Christ; but his Majesty is in his doctrine, his character, and his works. The herald, too, is a man in rough raiment, issuing from the wild solitudes in which he had been trained to converse with God, to rouse a slumbering people by urging their immediate repentance upon pain of imminent judgments; and the levelling of hills and valleys is that preparation of the heart for the doctrine of Christ which consists in contrition and humility. That John was a powerful Preacher, the immense number of persons who flocked to his baptism, confessing their sins, is a sufficient proof; that he was a successful one, in his spiritual office of "preparing the way of the Lord," appears from this, that several of the Apostles, and others of the early disciples of Christ, had been previously the disciples of John; and the effect of his preaching was, no doubt, not only to prepare them, but multitudes of the Jews, to receive the Gospel, both in Judea and in other places into which his disciples carried his doctrine; for of this the evangelical history contains many indications. There was also, probably, in this dispensation of John, something of a typical character. The way of Christ, in all ages, is "prepared" only by repentance; and whenever that is preached with power, and under right views of the Lamb of God, to which it is to point, as "taking away the sins of the world," the valleys are exalted, the mountains and hills are brought low, the crooked is made straight, and the rough places plain; and then comes the revelation of the Lord in pardoning mercy, and manifestation of Christ as "the salvation of God."

The ministry of John the Baptist was of a kind peculiar to itself. As a Prophet, he not only spoke of the immediate appearing of the Christ, but pointed him out to his disciples; and his baptism was, in fact, the token of initiation into a new dispensation, intermediate between that of Moses and fully revealed Christianity. It was a declaration of repentance and renunciation of sin, and it was a profession of faith in the immediate revelation of the Messiah, and of trust in him to take away sin; for to him, as the Redeemer, John directed his converts. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." With baptisms or washings, as emblems of the putting away of sin, the Jews were familiar; and proselytes from Gentilism to the religion of the Jews were baptized as well as circumcised, in token of the same thing, and the renunciation of their old religion. All the Jews, therefore, who, in truth, and with a right understanding of the case, submitted to John's baptism, so far renounced Judaism in its primitive form as a ground of hope, as to wait for the remission of sins, for which they repented and confessed, no longer from their accustomed sacrifices, but immediately from the Messiah: "Behold," said John, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Lightfoot has shown from the Rabbi-

nical writings, that the Jews themselves have held, and still hold, that repentance should precede the coming of the Messiah. The circumstance of our Lord's submission to John's baptism, does not affect this view of its nature and design. That it was not necessary for Christ as a sign of repentance, and passing into a new dispensation and better hopes of salvation, is clear from the objection of John to administer the peculiar rite of his ministry to Christ, until urged by his authority; and also from the ground on which our Lord puts his own act, which he makes not one of repentance, but of fulfilling all "righteousness," that is, perfectly obeying the will of the Father in every appointment laid upon him; and, finally, from the baptism of John, as administered to Christ, rising into an entirely different and higher order from his ordinary one; for our Lord was then "baptized with the Holy Ghost," which it was no part of John's baptism to bestow. All these circumstances prove, that John was, in the case of our Lord, employed in a ministry quite distinct from his common one; and that the chief end of the baptism of Christ was, to attest his Messiahship fully to John, by making him the witness of the sign which God had previously appointed. "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God." (John i. 33, 34.)

The burden of John's preaching bore no slight resemblance to the old prophetic exhortations whose last echo had now died away for centuries. He not only resembled Elijah in his sackcloth dress, spare diet, and retired mode of life, but also in his character, in his power of conversion, and spirit of reproof. Both, indeed, were raised up by Providence in times of general apostacy from the true faith, and corruption of morals, to reclaim and reform their countrymen. Both were commissioned to denounce vengeance from heaven, unless the nation repented, and were converted to the Lord their God; both were actuated by the same ardent and undaunted zeal in the discharge of their commission; both were persecuted for their *labour of love;* yet nothing deterred Elijah from boldly rebuking Ahab, Jezebel, and the idolatrous Israelites; nor John from reproving Herod, Herodias, and that "wicked and adulterous generation" of the Jews who flocked to his baptism.* John declared that the Almighty was about to establish in the earth that holy and spiritual kingdom which had been foretold, especially by Daniel, (chap. ii. 44; vii. 14, 27,) and that no one could be admitted into it who did not abhor and forsake his sin, and with a contrite heart return unto the Lord. He considered all persons, without exception, as in a state of depravity and guilt and condemnation. He unreservedly exhibited the doctrine which alone prepares for a renewal of the heart. He was the Preacher of that discipline which makes the soul submit to the grace and government of Christ, and which it must feel and understand in order to everlasting salvation. Those who professed a deep compunction were required to conform to the significant rite of baptism, which he administered, thereby publicly

* Hales's Analysis of Chronology, &c., vol. iii., p. 64. Second edition.

acknowledging their pollution, their need of a spiritual washing, and determination to abandon every evil way. He addressed the Scribes and Pharisees who crowded to his preaching in terms of the sharpest reprehension, and described them all as under the same sentence of punishment. Surprised by their appearance, and suspecting their sincerity, he called on them to give decided proofs of their penitence by fruits of righteousness. He warned them that their relation to Abraham, and their place in the visible church, would avail them nothing; that the last trial was then afforded them; and that, if this were neglected, their case was desperate, and their everlasting destruction unavoidable.

The ministry of John was consequently energetic and powerful; and it drew a great concourse of people to him from Jerusalem, all Judea and round about the Jordan. But when he saw many of the higher orders and rulers of the people thronging to partake of the baptism which he administered, not in sincerity, but in hypocrisy, he boldly rebuked them. "O generation of vipers,* who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" A sentence which has generally been supposed to allude solely to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem which is threatened at the conclusion of the Old Testament, and explained by our Lord in his parable of the barren fig-tree; (Luke xiii. 6—9;) words which evidently imply a negation, signifying that no one has warned you effectually; you are not penitently apprehensive of the displeasure of God, but either as Pharisees trust in yourselves that you already possess the favour of God, or as Sadducees treat the doctrine of a future punishment as vain and fabulous. Neither is the wrath to come to be confined to the destruction of the civil polity of the Jewish nation; for John dealt with his auditors as sinners in the sight of God, and, as such, liable to the penalty of transgression in a future life. "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." The Jews regarded it as sufficient righteousness that they were descended from so holy a man as Abraham, which would go very far to justify his posterity, though both the faith and the works of that patriarch were wanting among them. The futility of such a hope John endeavoured to prove, by showing, not that children to Abraham could be raised up from stones in the sense of natural descent and relationship, which was a thing impossible, but that as children to Abraham were at first raised up by a miracle in the birth of Isaac, so, though God should destroy the present race of Jews, no purpose of his would be void, because he was able to raise up a people from the stones to

* This expression is equivalent to "children of the devil," as being the seed of the "old serpent," always ready to calumniate and persecute the righteous "seed of the woman," (Gen. iii. 15,) as they did both John and Christ. (Luke vii. 31—35.) Our Lord adopted it (Matt. xii. 34; xxiii. 33) as synonymous with a "wicked and adulterous generation." The word "serpent," or "viper," is used to denote both cunning and malignancy, or wickedness. Among the Jews it was regarded as the symbol of artifice, circumspection, and prudence: it was thus viewed in the Egyptian hieroglyphics.

stand in the place of the natural descendants of Abraham, were that necessary to accomplish the designs of his providence and grace; evidently adverting to the calling of the Gentiles, whom the Jews despised as stupid and insensible, upon whom they trampled as on the stones beneath their feet, and whom they considered as unlikely to become members of the true church of God as the pebbles of the Jordan on the banks of which John was preaching. To these *stones* the Most High, by his grace, not only imparted spiritual life, adopting them as Abraham's believing seed, but also formed them into his church, to the exclusion of the disobedient Jews, making them his peculiar people.

"And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Fruitful and fruitless trees have in all ages been used as metaphors to express good and bad men; and as barren trees, after patient forbearance, are finally cut down and burned, so the certainty and terribleness of the punishment of the wicked are forcibly indicated by the metaphor. The same image is employed by Isaiah with great effect to express the judgments which should fall upon all the ranks of a guilty nation, by the Chaldean invasion: "Behold, the Lord of hosts shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one." (Isai. x. 33, 34.) The Baptist does not, however, refer to the Jewish state, but to the dangerous condition of sinful individuals. The axe being laid to the root, intimates both the long-suffering of God which gave them space for repentance, and the certainty that if the tree remained unfruitful, it would be "hewn down, and cast into the fire." Mercy grants delay, but justice lays down the axe in preparation for the work of excision. "Whose fan," continues the Preacher, "is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." The metaphors are here taken from the process of thrashing among the Jews. The sheaves of corn were trodden by oxen upon a "thrashing-floor," or prepared plain area, formed upon some elevated place, so as to force out the grain; then the winnowing-fan, which was often a portable instrument used by the hand, and here not inaptly rendered by some "a winnowing-shovel," was applied to throw up the grain to the wind, that the *chaff* might be separated from it; whilst the *straw*, being crushed beneath the feet of the oxen, and rendered worthless, was reserved, with the separated chaff, to be burned with other fuel in heating their ovens. The word "unquenchable fire" is awfully emphatic. The domestic fires in which the straw was burned as fuel, were extinguishable, and often extinguished; but this is "unquenchable," a clear indication of the perpetuity of future punishment. Those who refer all this to the destruction of Jerusalem, do not rightly apprehend the nature of John's ministry. His office was to warn men of their eternal danger, and to pluck them, if possible, out of the fire of divine wrath. There is not an expres-

sion in the whole of this discourse which leads to the supposition, that he intended merely or chiefly to warn his hearers against temporal judgments. Its awakening character was manifestly framed upon views of deeper and more formidable dangers than the Roman invasion, before which most of his hearers, he knew, would be in an eternal world. And as he had preached Christ in his offices of grace, so here he proclaims him in his office of Judge, separating the chaff and straw from the grain, the wicked from the righteous, the office which he now exercises in the invisible world, upon all departed spirits, between whom he will make a still more public separation, with visible majesty at the judgment of the great day.*

Alarmed by these awful denunciations of divine vengeance, the multitudes inquired, "What shall we do, then?" In answer to which this celebrated Preacher exhorted every class to forsake their ruling vices; he inculcated upon the hard-hearted and uncharitable Jews the necessity of being bountiful to the poor. "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise;" a benevolent and liberal spirit, which would be most unequivocally expressed by giving clothing to the naked, and food to the hungry. Many of the publicans had been impressed by his preaching, and naturally asked his advice with regard to their conduct. He does not declare their occupation to be an unlawful one, as many of the Jews imagined, for governments must be upheld by tribute, and that must be collected; but they were exposed to great temptations from the practices of their fellows, from the low standard of morality which existed among them, and from favourable opportunities to practise injustice; and he therefore made it the test of their sincerity, the "fruit meet for repentance," in their case, that they should "exact no more than was appointed them;" that is, appointed by law, or fixed by the authority of the supreme power. The soldiers, who were probably those of Herod, for the Roman troops were but little likely to go to his baptism, sought for practical direction in that new state and profession into which, by his instrumentality, they had been introduced. John did not exhort them to abandon a military life, as inconsistent with piety and godliness, but simply prohibits those vices which the licentiousness of the soldiery in those days most encouraged; namely, rapine, false information, and mutiny. They were to "do violence to no man;" that is, to put no man in fear, as the word signifies, either from wanton cruelty, or in order to extort property by threats of violence; nor "accuse any falsely," in order to obtain reward for an apparent zeal in the discharge of duty, or to share in the fines and confiscations inflicted upon suspected persons; and "be content with your wages," which includes meat, money, and all lawful perquisites. He did not spare the King himself, but reproved even Herod for his adultery respecting his brother Philip's wife, Herodias. "It is not lawful for thee to have her;" and, "For all the evils which he had done." (Luke iii. 19.)

"Of all people, the Pharisees and Sadducees were most intolerant

* Watson's Exposition *in loco*.

of rebuke upon any point of their darling corruptions; and they composed between them the Sanhedrim, or supreme ecclesiastical council. Ever on the watch against the slightest resistance against its dogmas, this body immediately took alarm at the boldness of John, who had neither asked their sanction to his mission, nor taken care to preach agreeably to their notions. When he first arose, they had gladly hailed him. His high birth recommended him to both parties; his austerity was especially agreeable to the Pharisees. They themselves, at the moment, smarting under Roman control, were anxiously expecting their promised deliverer from the hateful yoke, and joyfully accepted John's credentials. They acknowledged him for a burning light, and rejoiced in his light: but only for a time. As his preaching proceeded, and his doctrine unfolded itself, their zeal slackened. They had expected a Prophet fashioned after their own corrupt and carnal notions of the character of Elias,—a man who should instantly call down fire upon all gainsayers, should vindicate, with a high hand, the church of God, by which they principally understood their own corrupt tradition,—should pronounce sentence of deposition on Cæsar, as Elias did on the Kings of Samaria and Damascus,—and work miracles that should at once console the Jew, and confound the Heathen. Such only could be a worthy forerunner of the Messiah, whom they looked for, of an unrelenting warrior who should avenge the wrongs and oppression of Israel seven times seventy fold on the Heathen with fire and sword. They looked not for a spiritual Redeemer, and therefore not for a spiritual harbinger. But John preached of righteousness and a judgment to come: instead of promising victory, threatened them with destruction: instead of appealing to their fiery zeal, called them to repentance: instead of ritual holiness, demanded personal holiness: instead of saluting them as the chosen of God through their father Abraham, rebuked them as being but flinty and lifeless stones: instead of promising them the inheritance of the Heathen, commanded them to share their meat and raiment with the poor. He called not on them to prepare to rise and maintain their cause by arms; he bearded not the Roman oppressor; he did not inculcate hatred of their heathen masters; he did not declaim upon their wrongs, and light the fire of sacred sedition in their bosoms; and he worked no miracles. All this was a grievous disappointment of their hopes. Jesus himself scarcely disappointed them more." "Honourable mention is made of him by Josephus,* in a passage which cannot reasonably be disputed; and our Lord himself affirmed that he had filled the anticipated duties of Elias, and pronounced upon him that sentence before living men, which others must receive at the resurrection of the dead. Many hearts of the fathers did he turn to the children, and of the children to the fathers; and when the great and terrible day of the Lord came, his work abode and stood the proof. His course was brief: like Elias, he was going to rebuke Kings, and, like Elias, to have his life sought by them; but not, like Elias, to escape."†

* Joseph. Antiq., lib. xviii., cap. 5.

† Evans's Scripture Biography, pp. 207, 208.

By the lower orders of the people, John was held in high estimation, which attracted the notice, and probably the jealousy and displeasure, of the higher. Accordingly he was sent for to the court of Herod the Tetrarch * of Galilee, before whom he had an opportunity of bearing a faithful testimony. This Prince was an abandoned character. He had divorced his own wife, and joined himself to another by an adulterous and incestuous connexion: he had married the wife of his brother Philip, at whose house he sojourned when on a visit to Rome, thus violating the laws of morality, and the rights of hospitality, by seducing the wife of his host, whom he persuaded to abandon her own husband, and live with him in the perpetration of the double crime of adultery and incest, such marriages being expressly forbidden by the Levitical law. (Lev. xviii. 16.) John durst not connive at the sinful practices of the King. He sought not his favour; he feared not his displeasure. As a faithful servant of the Most High, not having respect to persons, he brought the heavy charge against the royal delinquent, and reprehended him with honesty and plainness. It was not a general invective against his numerous immoralities, but a special application to his conscience of the enormity of the offence, on account of it being dishonourable to the cause of religion, and injurious to the best interests of the nation: John, therefore, called upon him to put away the woman with whom the laws of God and of man forbad him to cohabit.

At this proceeding Herod was greatly enraged, and his officers were immediately commanded to bind and imprison the devoted man. It is recorded that the tyrant "added yet this above all," as if it were the greatest of all his enormities, "that he shut up John in prison." The adulterous Herodias, however, was more incensed than he, and from the first wished to destroy the Baptist. Probably she apprehended, that, through the Preacher's admonitions, she might lose her influence, and be dismissed with disgrace: she therefore urged the King, not merely to imprison, but put to death, the faithful messenger, that they might be no longer annoyed with his plain-spoken exhortations and reproofs. To this proposition Herod hesitated to yield an implicit compliance; he was evidently restrained by the powerful impression on his mind described in the following words of inspired truth: "He feared John, knowing that he was a just man, and an holy." Well has it been observed, "This circumstance demands our attention. The Lord put an honour upon his faithful servant, and made him respectable in chains, even before the most enraged enemies. Such a power very frequently accompanies eminent examples of godliness. It keeps in awe, and often terrifies, the persons who are disposed to persecute. Herod was struck with reverence for the man whom he had cast into the dungeon; and under the view of John's singular holiness, probably perceived his own baseness, so as to be distressed with painful apprehensions."†

* For an account of the family of Herod, see note, p. 126.

† Scripture Characters; or a practical Improvement of the principal Histories in the Old and New Testaments. By Thomas Robinson, M.A. 8vo. edit., vol. iv., p. 328. London, 1818.

The life of this useful man was now nearly at its close. The haughty and unprincipled Herodias had never lost sight of the attainment of her revenge; and, after having long and fruitlessly urged Herod to grant it to her, wrung it out from him, at length, through an unlooked-for opportunity. Herod's birth-day was kept. From times of old, Kings were accustomed to observe the anniversary of their natal day with much splendour, frequently giving an entertainment to their principal nobility.* (Gen. xl. 20.) According to the Evangelist Mark, this was done with great pomp, who says, that Herod "made a great feast for his Lords, high Captains, and the chief *persons* of Galilee;" that is, the chief men in office: the term "high Captains," refers to the commanders of thousands, or of a division of one thousand men. "The daughter of Herodias † danced before them, and pleased Herod." The dancing of this child of the Queen in the midst of the company, was a public and shameless glorying of Herod, and of his unlawful wife, in their wickedness; this daughter of Herodias being the offspring of Philip whom she had deserted, and whose child, as well as wife, had been violently taken from him by the stronger power of his brother. Dancing was common among the Jews on festive as well as on other occasions; and hence there appears no ground for considering it as in itself an act of lightness or indignity, the Princess being but a child, though sufficiently old to be instructed by her mother in what subsequently took place. Her name was Salome; and Herod appears to have been gratified with the elegance of her steps. His lavish admiration was also an act of flattery to the mother, who possessed such great influence over him. Nor is there any reason for the conjecture that this dance was one of that pantomimic character, satirised as licentious by some of the poets, and which, in truth, was of heathen original. Such dances were performed by hired women, who studied and practised them as a profession. Amateur dancing in high life was by no means uncommon in the voluptuous times of the Roman Emperors. But in the age of Herod it was exceedingly rare, and almost unheard-of; and, therefore, the condescension of Salome, who volunteered, in honour of the anniversary of that Monarch's birth-day, to exhibit her person, as she led the mazy dance in the saloons of Machærus, (for

* The ancients took only a very small refreshment for breakfast and dinner; for example, a little bread and wine, with an apple or two: the only meal to which friends were invited was made toward sunset. (Fleury, *Mœurs des Juifs et Chrét.;* Melmoth's Notes on Pliny's Letters.)

† Her name was Salome. She first married Philip the Tetrarch, her uncle; afterwards Aristobulus, son of Herod, King of Chalcis, by whom she had three sons, Herod, Agrippa, and Aristobulus. (Joseph. Antiq., lib. xviii., cap. 7.) Nicephorus (lib. i., cap. 20) and Metaphrastes relate that Salome accompanied her mother Herodias, and her father-in-law Herod, in their banishment; and that the Emperor having obliged them to go into Spain, as she passed over a river that was frozen, the ice broke under her feet, and she sunk in up to her neck; when the ice uniting again, she remained thus suspended by it, and suffered the same punishment she had made John the Baptist undergo. But none of the ancients mention this; and it is contrary to Josephus, who tells us she first married Philip the Tetrarch, son of Herod and Cleopatra, who died about the year 33 or 34; and afterwards Aristobulus, her cousin-german, by whom she had several children. Thus she lived above thirty years after the exile of her father-in-law. (Calmet.)

though she was a child at this time, as some suppose, she was still a Princess,) was felt to be a compliment that merited the highest reward. Herod was not backward to give it.

The inspired record informs us, that so great was the gratification of the King, that "he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask," * (Matt. xiv. 7,) even unto the half of his kingdom. (Mark vi. 23.) This instance of extreme rashness and folly produced the most terrible effects; for she, being instructed to that purpose by her mother,† said, "Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger."‡ It is by no means improbable that Herod was flushed with wine, and the Queen, fearing he would retract his promise if she deferred to urge her request until the morning, instigated Salome to demand immediately the head of John. What will not a vindictive mind surrender for the sake of wreaking its vengeance on an enemy!

Herod appeared to be struck with horror at the atrocious proposal, and yet had no firmness to resist. However his conscience might remonstrate, he determined not to exasperate Herodias by a refusal, and absurdly argued, that unless he complied, he would be despised

* In the east it is customary for public dancers, at festivals in great houses, to solicit, from the company they have been entertaining, such rewards as the spectators may choose to bestow: these usually are small pieces of money. Herod, however, offered half his kingdom to Salome, who had danced to please him; and in this, if he were not equal in wisdom, he was certainly superior in extravagance, to a Monarch, "Shah-Abbas, who being one day drunk in his palace, gave a woman, that danced much to his satisfaction, the fairest *Khan* in all Ispahan, which was not yet finished, but wanted little; this *Khan* yielded a great revenue to the King to whom it belonged, in chamber rents." So far the parallel is tolerably exact; for, that Herod was far from sober is a pardonable suspicion; but the sequel is different. "The Nazer having put him in mind of it, next morning, took the freedom to tell him that it was unjustifiable prodigality: so the King ordered to give her a hundred *tomans*," (£200,) with which she was forced to be contented. (Thevenot's Travels in Persia, p. 100.)

† "She went forth," (Mark vi. 24,) slipped away, out of that hall, to her mother, who was either close by, or in the harem of the palace; and returning "straightway," in haste, before she could be missed by the King, or he could possibly suspect where she had been for advice, demanded, forthwith, instantly the head of John the Baptist; who, being in the prison in another part of the palace, (a common thing in the east,) was slain directly by a *capitzi* sent by Herod. So that the whole of this history passed in a very rapid manner, was over presently, and was, as it were, one transaction. This account, thus understood, agrees more precisely with that of Matthew; (chap. xiv.;) the pre-instruction of the daughter by the mother (verse 8) becomes perfectly easy; and the "Give me here" (not *presently*, as we *now* use that word, as in our rendering of Mark, but *instantly*, at the present time) "the head of John," is an entire coincidence. (Taylor's Fragments.)

‡ At the time of this event, it was common for Princes to require the heads of eminent persons, whom they ordered for execution, to be brought to them, especially when there was any particular resentment. We have an instance in Josephus, which follows the story of this criminal marriage of Herodias. Aretas was extremely provoked at the treatment of his daughter, to whom Herod was previously united. At length a war broke out between them. A battle was fought, and Herod's troops were defeated. "Herod sent an account of this to Tiberius; and he, resenting the attempt of Aretas, wrote to Vitellius to declare war against him, with orders, that if he were taken prisoner he should be brought to him in chains, and that, if he were slain, his head should be sent to him." (Joseph. Antiq., lib. xix., cap. vi., sect. 1.) Agrippina, then wife of Claudius, and mother of Nero, who was afterwards Emperor, sent an officer to put to death Lollia Paulina, who had been her rival for the imperial dignity. And Dio Cassius says, when Lollia's head was brought to her, not knowing it at first, she examined it with her own hands, till she perceived some particular feature by which that lady was distinguished. (Lardner's Works, vol. i., p. 20. 8vo. edit. London, 1831.

by his nobility for weakness and inconstancy. Herod had not been over-scrupulous in performing oaths taken on much more solemn occasions than this. How had he kept his oath towards his people? how the oath of espousal to his former repudiated wife? Yet here he thought himself compelled to keep faith with a party who, knowing that he never contemplated such a request, had recourse to a quibble, in order to accomplish her sanguinary purpose; for had she asked, simply, to put the Baptist to death, her demand would not have answered to the terms or sense of his promise, which was a gift. And this too when the act required of him was one of abominable wickedness, the murder of a just and holy and innocent man, as he knew John to be. But it was not from any principle that he kept his oath. He was afraid of appearing fickle; he was afraid of showing a tenacious respect for a man of John's austerity; he was afraid of appearing regardless of an oath before man, but thought not how he should appear before God, in whose name he had made it. This cunning fox was thus caught in a snare, and cut the Gordian knot, which his first crime of a rash oath had tangled for him, with the sword of murder. He now presented the first-fruits of his mocking the Saviour of the world, and remanding him to Pilate.*

The Evangelist Matthew records this unprincipled and cruel act in terse but emphatic language: "And the King was sorry: nevertheless, for the oath's sake and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her." Such are the contradictions in human nature, and especially in tyrants accustomed to indulge every passion to excess, and to surrender themselves to every impression, unchecked by anything but some contrary feeling in their own minds, swelling like waves, and dashing against each other. Many reasons have been suggested as the cause of his sorrow. Herod had a high esteem for John, and feared him. He stood in awe of his sanctity, knowing that he was a just man and a holy, and protected him, probably, from the persecutions of some of the more powerful Pharisees and Sadducees: "when he heard him, he did many things" according to his exhortations, "and heard him gladly." And yet, in his unjust anger, excited because John refused either to sanction or to be silent respecting an incestuous marriage, he first cast him into prison, and then surrendered his life to the fury of the partner of his guilt. Of so little consequence is it for us to do "many things," at the command of God, unless we walk "in all his statutes and ordinances blameless;" for the example of Herod teaches this important lesson, that a partial surrender of ourselves to the influence of truth is no security at all against the overwhelming out-breakings of those corruptions of the heart which remain unmortified.† Again: John was in high repute among the people, and Herod might have been afraid that his cold-blooded murder might excite commotion; Herod,

* Scripture Biography. By the Rev. R. W. Evans, M.A. Second series. Pp. 211, 212. London, 1835.

† An Exposition of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, and of some other detached Parts of Holy Scripture. By the Rev. Richard Watson. *In loco*. London, 1833.

though a notoriously wicked man, does not appear to have been insensible to some of the common principles of human nature. Here was a great and manifest crime proposed; no less than the *murder* of an acknowledged Prophet of the Lord. It was deliberate. It was to gratify the malice of a wicked woman. It was the price of a few moments' entertainment. His conscience, though in feeble and dying accents, checked him. He would have preferred a request not so manifestly wicked, and one which would not have involved him in such difficulty and perplexity, so as to drive him to such wretched casuistry as that of which he was guilty. Had Herodias instructed her daughter to demand Herod's own head, no doubt this pretended respecter of oaths would have excused himself from the obligation! Herod was probably, for the most part, influenced by the circumstances of those who sat with him at meat, in whose presence he would not seem to refuse to gratify his wife, for whom he had a blind passion, and whose suit they might enforce by way of making their court to her. It is not improbable, that among the guests were some of those enemies of John, from whose persecutions Herod had before protected him. Doubtless, the greater number present were infidel Sadducees, and those Pharisees who were justly characterized by our Lord, as "whited walls and painted sepulchres." Had they been any thing better, they would have interposed in behalf of the victim, and discovered their true skill in interpreting the law, of which they made their boast, by showing Herod that no oath could bind him to commit murder, much less a vague and general one. This is sufficiently indicative of the character of his guests.*

The sanguinary order was executed! "He sent and beheaded John in prison." (Matt. xiv. 10.) For the sake of the wicked men with whom "he sat at meat," the bloody offering, the head of the slaughtered Prophet, slain alone in a dungeon, and by night,† was brought and given as the reward to the daughter and the mother!‡

* Watson's Exposition, *in loco.*

† This is not the only instance of such an outrage. Whilst Commodus was immersed in blood and luxury, he devolved the detail of the public business on Perennis; a servile and ambitious minister, who had obtained his post by the murder of his predecessor, but who possessed a considerable share of vigour and ability. By acts of extortion, and the forfeited estates of the nobles sacrificed to his avarice, he had accumulated an immense treasure. The Prætorian guards were under his immediate command; and his son, who already discovered a military genius, was at the head of the Illyrian legions. Perennis aspired to the empire; or what, in the eyes of Commodus, amounted to the same crime, he was capable of aspiring to it, had he not been prevented, suppressed, and put to death. Herodian relates, that Commodus, having learnt from a soldier the ambitious designs of Perennis, and his son, caused them to be attacked and massacred by night. (Gibbon's Rome. Milman's Edition, 8vo. Vol. i., p. 152.)

‡ Jerome relates, that Herodias, holding the Baptist's head in her hands, pierced the tongue with her bodkin, in like manner as Antony's wife served Cicero. (Calmet.) He had been doomed to death at the instigation of Antony, one of the triumvirate. He had fled in a litter towards the sea of Caieta, and when the assassins came up to him, he put his head out of the litter, and it was severed from the body by Herennius. This event happened in December, B.C. 43, after the enjoyment of life for nearly sixty-four years. The head and right hand were carried to Rome, and hung up in the *forum;* and, so inveterate was Antony's hatred against the unhappy man, that even Fulvia, the triumvir's wife, wreaked her vengeance upon his head, and drew the tongue out of his mouth, and bored it through repeatedly with a gold bodkin, verifying, in this act of inhumanity, what Cicero had once observed, that *no animal is more revengeful than a woman.*

What an offering to a woman! Well might Josephus say respecting her, that "she was a woman full of ambition and envy, having a mighty influence on Herod, and able to persuade him to do things he was not at all inclined to." The same historian, however, assigns a somewhat different cause for this execution from that given in the narrative of the Evangelists. The passage, notwithstanding, carries forcible evidence to the general truth of the Gospel narrative, and therefore we transcribe it. "Some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John that was called the Baptist; for Herod slew him, although he was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness one towards another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism. Now, when others came in crowds about him, (for they were greatly moved by hearing his words,) Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion, (for they seemed ready to anything he should advise,) thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late. Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, on account of Herod's suspicious temper, to Machærus,* and was there put to death."† There is no inconsistency between this account, and that of the inspired Evangelists. Both may be correct. John was condemned in the mind of Herod on political grounds, as endangering his position, and afterwards executed on private and apparent reasons, in order to gratify a malicious but powerful woman. The scriptural reason was but the pretext for carrying into effect what the machinations of Herod's court had long determined. Josippon, who flourished about the ninth or tenth century, though silent respecting Jesus Christ, or James the Lord's brother, mentions the death of John the Baptist, and in a manner more consonant with the records of the New Testament, than the passage of Josephus above quoted. He represents the Tetrarch as a very wicked Prince, and says, "that

* The castle of Machærus, where John was imprisoned and beheaded, was a fortress lying on the southern extremity of Perœa, at the top of the lake Asphaltites, between the dominions of Herod and Aretas, King of Arabia Petræa, and at the time of our history appears to have belonged to the former. (Lardner's Works, vol. vi., p. 483.) According to the Scripture account, the daughter of Herodias obtained the Baptist's head at an entertainment, without delay. How could this be, when Machærus lay at a distance from Jerusalem? The feast seems to have been made at Machærus, which, besides being a strong-hold, was also a palace, built by Herod the Great; and Herod himself was now on his route towards the territories of Aretas, with whom he was at war. Bishop Marsh (Lecture xxvi.) remarks, that the soldiers, who, in Luke iii. 14, are said to have come to John while baptizing in the Jordan, are designated by a term (στρατευομενοι, not στρατιωται) which denotes persons actually engaged in war, not merely soldiers. In the same way, in Mark vi. 27, the officer sent to bring John's head bears a military title, σπεκουλατωρ. These minute indications are quite accordant with the fact, that Herod was then making war with Aretas, as appears from Josephus, (Antiq., lib. xviii., cap. 5, sect. 1,) and afford a very strong evidence of the credibility of the sacred narratives, by showing that the authors described what was actually proceeding before their own eyes. We also see a reason why Herodias was present on this occasion, since she was Herod's paramour, and had, "like another Helen," led to the war. (Kitto's Cyclopedia.)

† Joseph. Antiq., lib. xviii., cap. v., sect. 2.

he took to himself, to be his own wife, the wife of his brother Philip, though his brother was still living, and she had children by him. He killed many wise men in Israel; and he killed that great Priest, John the Baptizer, because he had said to him, 'It is unlawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.'" *

Thus fell the honoured Prophet, a martyr to ministerial faithfulness, in the bold maintenance of the truth of God before the face of Princes; and thus added his name to the list of Prophets whose blood was shed by an unthankful country. His character is one of singular interest. Other Prophets testified of Christ: he pointed to him as already come. Others saw him afar off: he beheld the advancing glory of his ministry eclipsing his own, and rejoiced to "decrease," while his Master "increased." His ministry stands as a type of the true character of evangelical repentance: it goes before Christ, and prepares his way; it is humbling, but not despairing; for it points to "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." Elijah stood alone; and, without a partner, successfully combated the apostacy of the people, and re-established the church of God among them. John, also, stood single in a remarkable manner. He was the sole herald of a new dispensation in the church. The law and the Prophets were until him. The one proclaimed by typical rites, the other by inspired prediction, the kingdom of heaven to come. Their still small voice was superseded by the loud proclamation of John, which announced as close at hand what they foreshowed at a distance. Thus he was greater than all the Prophets before him, several of whose predictions terminated in him. His solitary voice from the desert is the single connecting note between the strains of the Preachers of the Old and New Testaments; the rigid austerity of his life was the last hold of the law upon the church, and his doctrine and baptism were the first contact of the first embrace of the Gospel; he came forth in the power and spirit of Elijah, the grand prophetic Minister under the old covenant, and conferred the right of inauguration upon the divine messenger of the new.†

The death of the Baptist took place, as is generally believed, about the end of the thirty-first year of the vulgar era, or in the commencement of the thirty-second. The Greek and Latin churches celebrate the festival of John's beheading on the 29th of August. The disciples of John being informed of his death, gave notice thereof to Jesus Christ, and came and carried away his body. (Matt. xiv. 12.) The Gospel does not tell where they buried him; but in the time of Julian the Apostate, his tomb was shown at Samaria, where the inhabitants of the country opened it and burnt a part of his bones: the remainder were saved by some Christians, who carried them to an Abbot of Jerusalem, named Philip. This Abbot made a present

* "Ipse accepit uxorem Philippi fratris sui adhuc viventis in uxorem, licet illa haberet filios ex fratre ejus: eam, inquam, accepit sibi in uxorem. Occidit autem multos sapientes Israël. Occidit etiam Jochanon sacerdotum magnum, ob id quod dixerat ei: Non licet tibi accipere uxorem fratris tui Philippi in uxorem. Occidit ergo Jochanon Baptistam."—*Josipp.*, lib. vi., cap. lxiii., p. 274.

† Evans's Scripture Biography, second series p. 212.

of them to Athanasius, at Alexandria, who put them in a well, till they were lodged in a more honourable place. Some time after, Theodosius, having demolished the temple of Serapis, a church was built in the room of it in honour of John the Baptist, where these relics,* it is said, were placed, A.D. 395.

NOTE.—Page 119.

THE mention of Herod renders it necessary to connect his history with that of the Jews after their return from the Babylonish captivity. This took place four hundred and thirty-five years before the birth of Christ. The Jews continued under the protection of the Kings of Persia for two hundred years; in the early part of which period they were ruled by governors of their own nation, appointed by the Persian court; and in the latter the High Priests were deputed to this office. The Persian empire was subverted by Alexander the Great, on whose death the *Seleucidæ* reigned in Syria, and the Ptolemies in Egypt. The provinces Cœlo-Syria and Palestine were wrested from the Ptolemies by Antiochus the Great, King of Syria. His son, Antiochus Epiphanes, conquered Egypt, and then made a furious attack upon the Jews *one hundred and seventy* years before Christ, plundered Jerusalem, polluted the temple, destroyed forty thousand of the inhabitants; and a short time afterwards renewed his atrocities; and, being a bitter persecuting Pagan, he abolished, as far as he was able, the worship of God, and consecrated the temple to Jupiter Olympus. These acts of outrage and cruelty, as we have noticed, called forth the pious patriotism of the celebrated family of the Maccabees, who, after the most severe and noble struggles, in which they were well supported by the devoted heroism of the Jews, succeeded in expelling the Syrians. This was the rise of the Asmonean family, as the Maccabees were also called, from an ancestor of the name of Asmoneus; and Judas Maccabeus, who

* If we were to credit the ludicrous stories which Romish annalists have recorded, we should speedily arrive at the conclusion that John the Baptist was remarkably prolific in heads, as a multitude are exhibited on the Continent, each of which is represented as the undoubted *caput* of the celebrated martyr. Several churches and religious houses, professing to possess among their rarities the veritable head, are at this moment to be found. On this foolery we shall not stop to descant. Alban Butler, in his "Lives of the Saints," says enough: "Rufinus and Theodoret inform us, that in the reign of Julian the Apostate, the Pagans broke open the tomb of John the Baptist which was at Sebaste, in Samaria, and burnt part of his sacred bones, some part being saved by the Christians. These were sent to Athanasius at Alexandria. Some time after, in 396, Theodosius built a great church in that city in honour of the Baptist upon the spot where the temple of Serapis had formerly stood, and those holy relics were deposited in it, as Theophanes testifies. But a distribution of some portions was made to certain other churches; and the great Theodoret obtained a share for his church at Cyrus, and relates, that he and his diocess had received from God several miraculous favours through the intercession of this glorious saint. The Baptist's head was discovered at Emisa, in Syria, in the year 453, and was kept with honour in the great church of that city, till, about the year 800, this precious relic was conveyed to Constantinople, that it might not be sacrilegiously insulted by the Saracens. When that city was taken by the French in 1204, Waldo de Sarton, a Canon of Amiens, brought part of this head, that is, all the face, except the lower jaw, into France, and bestowed it on his own church, where it is preserved to this day. Part of the head of the Baptist is said to be kept in St. Sylvester's church in Campo Marzo at Rome; though Sirmond thinks this to be the head of St. John the Martyr of Rome. Pope Clement VIII., to remove all reasonable doubt respecting the relic of this saint, procured a small part of the head that is kept at Amiens for St. Sylvester's church." (Butler's Lives, vol. i., p. 374. 8vo. edit. Dublin.)

united the high priesthood with the supreme government, formed an alliance with the Romans, the better to defend the new commonwealth which his valour had founded. The successors of Judas were Jonathan, Simon, John Hyrcanus, who subdued the Idumeans, Aristobulus, who assumed the title of King, Alexander Janæus, Alexandra his widow, Aristobulus the younger son, deposed by Pompey, who restored Hyrcanus the elder son, but forbade the use of the diadem, and made the nation tributary to the Romans. The Prime Minister of this Hyrcanus, the last of the Asmonean family, was Antipater, who, having ingratiated himself with the Romans, obtained from them for his son Herod, afterwards called the Great, the government of Galilee; and Herod, having married Mariamne, the grandaughter of Hyrcanus, with much opposition and violence, and by the favour of Marc Antony, took possession of the kingdom of Judea. He died within two years after the real time of the birth of Christ, and soon after the slaughter of the innocents at Bethlehem. The distribution of his kingdom, by his will, was confirmed by Augustus Cæsar. Archelaus had Judea, Herod Antipas the tetrarchy of Iturea and Trachonitis. Herod Philip seems to have been left in a private station. The names of these Princes appear in the Gospels. Archelaus was reigning when Joseph and Mary returned from Egypt. Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch, or, by courtesy, the King, of Galilee, is several times mentioned; (Matt. xiv. 1, 3, 6; Mark vi. 14; Luke iii. 1, 19;) and to him our Lord was sent by Pilate. Philip is mentioned, Luke iii. 1. Herodias was the wife of Herod Philip, and was married to Herod Antipas during the life-time of her husband, which proved the occasion of the murder of John the Baptist. (Matt. xiv. 3—10.) The Herod Agrippa mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, was a grandson of Herod the Great, and brother of Herodias. The Emperor Caligula made him Tetrarch of Trachonitis and Abilene, to which Claudius added the kingdom of Judea. He it was that put James the Apostle to death, (Acts xii. 1, 2,) and was mortally smitten of God, in the height of his pride, at Cæsarea. (Acts xii. 20.) On his death, a Roman governor was again appointed to Judea. His son, Agrippa II., succeeded to the tetrarchies of Trachonitis and Abilene. Before this Agrippa St. Paul delivered his reasons for becoming a Christian. (Acts xxvi.) ("Watson's Exposition.") Herod Antipas and his guilty paramour died in disgrace. In the year *nine* of the Christian era, Herodias, being jealous of the prosperity of her brother Agrippa, who from a private person had become King of Judea, persuaded her husband, Herod Antipas, to visit Rome, and desire the same dignity of the Emperor Caius. She resolved to accompany him, and hoped that her presence and appearance would contribute to procure the Emperor's favour. However, Agrippa, obtaining intelligence of this design, wrote to the Emperor, and accused Antipas. The messenger of Agrippa arrived at Baiæ, where the Emperor was, at the very time when Herod received his first audience. Caius, on the delivery of Agrippa's letters, read them with great earnestness. In these letters, Agrippa accused Antipas of having been a party in Sejanus's conspiracy against Tiberius, and said that he still carried on a correspondence with Artabanus, King of Parthia, against the Romans. As a proof of this, he affirmed that Antipas had in his arsenals arms for seventy thousand men. Caius, being angry, demanded hastily of Antipas, if it were true that he had such a quantity of arms. The King, not daring to deny it, was instantly banished to Lyons in Gaul. The Emperor offered to forgive Herodias, in consideration of her brother Agrippa; but she chose rather to follow her husband, and to share his fortune in banishment.

This is that Antipas, who, being at Jerusalem at the time of our Saviour's passion, ridiculed Jesus whom Pilate had sent to him, dressed him in worn-out royalty, and sent him back to Pilate as a mock King, whose ambition gave him no umbrage. (Luke xxiii. 7, 11.) The year of the death of Antipas is unknown; but it is certain, that he, as well as Herodias, died in exile. Josephus says that he died in Spain, whither Caius, on his coming into Gaul the first year of his banishment, might have ordered him to be sent.

CHAPTER II.

SECT. I. MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN.—*Elevated Character of a Martyr for Christ—State of the Church at this Period—Murmuring of the Grecians—Cause of it—Hellenists—Remedy for the Evil complained of—Deacons—Their Office—Agapæ—Ignatius and Justin Martyr quoted—Stephen—His Character—The Nature of the Discussions in which he engaged with the Jews—Various Synagogues in Jerusalem—Foreign Jews—Libertines—Cyrenians—Alexandrians—Of Cilicia—Of Asia—Stephen is falsely accused—Defends himself before the Council—His Vision—Its monitory and consoling Character—Rage of the Mob—Stephen is hurried out of the City and stoned—Remarks on his Death—The Place of his Martyrdom—His Relics said to be discovered—Their supposed miraculous Power—Folly of Romanism on this Subject—The Power of the Jewish Council considered—Dr. Lardner quoted—Stoning, a capital Punishment of the Jews—Duration of the Persecution which followed the Death of Stephen—Saul of Tarsus an active Agent of the Chief Priests—His mode of Assault upon the Christians—The Gospel spreads—Martyrdom of Nicanor and others—Comparison between Zechariah and Stephen.* SECT. II. MARTYRDOM OF JAMES THE ELDER—*His History—Character—Called to be an Apostle—Tradition of James introducing the Gospel into Spain, noticed—His Intimacy with our Lord—Is cruelly put to Death—Career of Herod Agrippa—His miserable End.*

SECTION I.—MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN.

How different is the feeling, observes a modern writer, with which we read the words and deeds of the martyrs from that which accompanies the consideration of all other characters! That which comes nearest to it is our regard to the memory of the hero who died for his and our country. We admire his high spirit and courage, we venerate him for his wisdom, we love him for his kinder qualities, especially for the love which he bore to his country, we pity him for his short date of life, we are stirred as with the sound of a trumpet at the story of his mighty deeds; and these feelings are rendered still more lively by the insinuation into them of our personal vanity, which is gratified at being fellow-countrymen of such a man. Yet our sympathy is exceedingly imperfect. If we gaze with a reverential fervour upon his mouldering sword and surcoat, which, with his rusty casque and tattered banner, are hung over his tomb, yet these aspirations soon make way for a sigh upon the vanity of this world. Not only the rust and rags of these monuments teach us the frailty of everything earthly, but their very fashion also forcibly reminds us how completely his age has gone by, how very different are the times in which we are living. It is with difficulty that we can trace down

THE MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN.

to ourselves, in an uninterrupted tissue of reflection, the benefits which he acquired for his country. Still more hard do we find it, amid such striking contrarieties from without, to associate our feelings with his. But the martyr died for an universal, an everlasting, country, of which the fashions, the principles, the laws, and therefore the feelings, are the same throughout all nations, and all generations of nations, to the end of the world. The crown of glory which he has acquired is imperishable; and when we look upon his tomb, we think not of his bones below, but of his spirit above. The cause in which he fell is not only just and honourable before man, but approved and precious before God. And it is one to which we ourselves are bound, in common with him, in its most minute particularities, in particular weapon, particular armour, particular interest, particular friend, particular foe, particular King; and not only have we in common with him, but we are one with him, and he with us: the same spirit fills us: we look not on one who had once the same breath of life which we now have, but on one who has the same breath of everlasting life at this moment; who is in the same communion of saints with ourselves. Our sense of obligation to him is exalted by the consideration that he was the chosen instrument of the most high God to call us into the blessedness of the membership of his eternal city; and the greater our advance in holiness, the greater is our sympathy with him, and the more do we love and bless his memory.*

The church of Christ in these early days was distinguished for "unity and godly love," being of one heart and soul. They continued together with one accord, worshipped in one place, and fed together at one table. None could want; for they had all things in common. Those who were rich sold their estates to minister to the necessities of the poor; the money was deposited in one common treasury, and distributed under the inspection of the Apostles. The church increasing daily in numbers, the superintendence of the Apostles over the distribution of the common fund was of necessity committed to others, and due equality ceased to be observed: some received larger gratuities, and others less, than their just wants required: the result was, "there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." (Acts vi. 1.)

It may not be useless to inquire who these Greeks or Hellenists were, who felt themselves thus injured, or treated with indifference and neglect, in the daily act of charity. Dr. Cave informs us, that the opinion that has most generally obtained is, that they were originally Jews, born and bred in Grecian or heathen countries, of the dispersed among the Gentiles, who accommodated themselves to their manner of living, spake the Greek language, but altogether mingled with Hebraisms and Jewish forms of speech, and used no other Bible but the Greek translation of the Septuagint. Salmasius has endeavoured, with considerable ingenuity, to confute this idea, by showing that no people ever went under that name or character; that the

* Evans's Scripture Biography, p. 334. London, 1834.

Jews, in whatever part of the world they might be found, were not a distinct nation from those that lived in Palestine, and that there never was any such peculiar distinct Hellenistic dialect, nor any such ever mentioned by ancient writers. It is therefore probable, that they were not of the Hebrew race, but Greek or Gentile proselytes, who had themselves, or by their ancestors, deserted the superstitions and idolatry of Paganism, and entered the Jewish church, taking upon themselves circumcision, and the observance of the Mosaic law, and were now converted to the Christian faith. Many of these proselytes were now at Jerusalem, who were brought under the influence of the Gospel, from among whom one of the seven chosen to be Deacons was a proselyte of Antioch. Hence we learn why the widows of these Hellenists had not so much care taken of them as those of the Hebrews: the individuals with whom the Apostles in a great measure intrusted the distribution of the supplies, were more indulgent toward those of their own nation, their neighbours, and kindred, than to others who agreed with them only in the profession of Christianity, and were utterly unable to contribute to the general stock in an equal proportion with the native Jews, who had lands and possessions which "they sold and laid at the Apostles' feet." (Acts iv. 37.)

To remedy this evil, and to preserve "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," the Apostles called the disciples together, whom they informed that the disposal of the common stock, and making daily provision for the poorer members of the church, were inconsistent with the due and efficient discharge of other and more important duties of their office as the Apostles of Christ, and Ministers of the Gospel. They therefore recommended that the people should choose from among themselves seven men "of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom," whom they might set apart peculiarly to superintend these affairs, while they, more freely and without interruption, might give themselves "continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." (Acts vi. 4.) This was the origin of Deacons in the Christian church: * they were to "serve tables,"

* The term "Deacon" is from a Greek word which, in its proper and primitive sense, denotes a servant, who waits on his employer at table, and is always near his person to obey his orders, which was accounted a more creditable kind of service than that which is implied by the word δουλος, "a slave;" but this distinction is not usually observed in the New Testament. Our Lord makes use of both terms in Matt. xx. 26, 27, though they are not distinctly marked in our translation. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your *Deacon;* and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." In ecclesiastical polity, the Deacon is the lowest of the different orders of the Clergy. In the Romish Church he served at the altar, in the celebration of what are called "the holy mysteries." He is also allowed to baptize, and to preach with the permission of the Bishop. Formerly, Deacons were allowed to marry; but this was prohibited very early; and at present the Pope dispenses with this prohibition only for very important reasons. In such cases they re-enter the condition of laymen. There are eighteen *Cardinal Deacons* in Rome, who have the charge of the temporal interests and the revenues of the Church. A person, to be consecrated Deacon, must be twenty-three years of age. In the English Church Deacons are also Ecclesiastics, who can perform all the offices of a Priest, except the consecration of the sacramental elements, and the pronouncing of the absolution. In German Protestant churches the assistant Ministers are generally called "Deacons." If there be two assistants, the first of them is called "Archdeacon." In the Presbyterian churches, the Deacon's office is generally merged in that of Ruling Elder; but in some it is distinct, and simply embraces the distribution

that is, to wait upon the necessities of the poor, to make provision for the public festivals of the community, to attend to the secular affairs of the church, receive and disburse money, and provide everything necessary for its temporal good. Thus while the Bishop attended to the souls, the Deacons attended to the bodies, of the people; the Pastor to the spiritual, and the Deacons to the temporal, interests of the church. This description of the office of a Deacon agrees with a definition of the word διακονος which we find in the ancient classics, whose duty it was to distribute portions to every guest, either according to the command of the αρχιτρικλινος, "governor of the feast," or according to the rule of equality, which apportioned to each alike. It is, however, probable, that other services were exacted, as it cannot be supposed that the Apostles would have laid so much stress on the character of the men to be chosen, nor would they have set them apart in a manner so solemn and imposing, had the office been confined merely to the adjustment of the temporal affairs of the community, which might have been discharged by men of ordinary rank and capacity.* "Serving tables" doubtless implied the attendance at the table of the Lord's supper; and as their *agapæ*, or "love-feasts," at which the rich and the poor sat down together, were always associated with the administration of the eucharist, the services of the Deacon were in constant requisition. To these Ignatius the martyr referred in his epistle to the Trallians: "The Deacons, also, as being the ministers of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, must, by all means, please all. For they are not the ministers of meat and drink, but of the church of God."† Justin Martyr, also, makes similar mention of these functionaries: "The eucharistical office," he says, "being thus performed by the Bishop, and concluded with the acclamation of the people, those we call 'Deacons' distribute to every one present, to partake of this eucharistical bread and wine and water, and then they carry it to the absent."‡ In the inspired record of these events, Stephen stands foremost.

Stephen was one of those Jews who were born among the Heathen, spoke their language, and, where it was indifferent, conformed to their habits. He was chosen with six others to minister to the necessities of their slighted and overlooked brethren. With this unequivocal testimony of the church in his favour, Stephen first appears among us; and there is something exceedingly moving in the specta-

of alms. Among Congregationalists the Deacons, besides attending to the temporal concerns of the church, assist the Minister with their advice, take the lead at prayer-meetings when he is absent, and preach occasionally to smaller congregations in the contiguous villages. (Henderson.)

* Some remark that there were two orders of Deacons: 1. *The Deacons of the table*, whose business it was to take care of the alms collected in the church, and distribute them among the poor, widows, &c.; and, 2. The Deacons of the word, whose business it was to *preach*, and variously instruct the people. It seems that after the persecution raised against the apostolic church, in consequence of which they became dispersed, the deaconship of tables ceased, as did also the community of goods; and Philip, who was one of these Deacons, who at first served tables, betook himself entirely to the preaching of the word.

† Wake's Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers. 8vo. edit., p. 67. London. 1737.

‡ Reeves's Apologies of the Fathers. 8vo. Vol. i., p. 119. London. 1709.

cle of a youthful disciple advancing so quickly to the fight, and triumphing so gloriously. He was early removed to a better world. He was fitted for extensive usefulness; his acquaintance with the doctrines of the Gospel, and his eloquence in declaring them, rendered him an useful herald of the cross; he was favoured also with miraculous powers, and the spirit of courage, which enabled him to preach the truth with firmness, and also to confirm the word by numerous public and unquestionable miracles. The zeal and diligence of his ministry, together with the extraordinary success which attended it, excited the malice of the Jews, and many testified their readiness to oppose and resist him; but they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. They had then recourse to the usual artifices of the discomfited children of perdition, which they learn from their father the devil, who stands accusing the brethren night and day. Misrepresentation, perjury, and calumny were employed incessantly against him.

The nature of the discussions in which Stephen had to engage, and the disputants with whom he had to contend, necessarily come under consideration. The relief which the Apostles felt in having the trouble of "the tables" taken off their hands, seems to have shown itself immediately in the increasing number of converts. We now meet with the extraordinary fact, that a great multitude of the Priests embraced the Gospel; and the feast of tabernacles, which Dr. Edward Burton supposed to be at hand, would be likely to bring many new converts among the foreign Jews. The presence of one of the great festivals is also indicated by what we read of Stephen disputing with persons belonging to the synagogues of Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia, and Asia Minor. We are told that there were as many as *four hundred and eighty* synagogues in Jerusalem; * and it seems highly probable, that many of them were built by foreign Jews, who thus had synagogues of their own to which they could resort when they attended the public festivals. Some of these persons now heard, for the first time, of a new sect which was making a surprising progress in Jerusalem; and we may perhaps infer, that the Chief Priests had been waiting for their arrival in the hope of engaging them in their scheme against the Christians. There were now several persons besides the Apostles who were active in preaching the Gospel; and though the synagogues were crowded by this influx of foreign Jews, they entered them boldly, and defended their doctrines. In these disputations Stephen engaged: and, as far as words were concerned, his victory was easy; for prejudice and error were against him, but truth and sincerity were on his side.

Of those who took an active part in the dispute with Stephen, were "certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia." (Acts vi. 9.) Opinion has been much divided respecting the Libertines. The conjectures which have been formed concerning them may be reduced to three. 1. The term is of Latin origin, and

* Burton's Lectures upon the Ecclesiastical History of the first Century, p. 66. Oxford. 1831.

signifies "a freed man," one who had been a slave and had obtained emancipation. Many have supposed that these persons were manumitted slaves of Roman origin, but who had become proselytes to the Jewish faith, and had a synagogue in Jerusalem. This opinion is open to much dispute, though it is certain Tacitus tells us of many of this description being resident in Rome; * and that four thousand Jewish proselytes of Roman slaves made free were sent at one time to Sardinia. 2. A second opinion is, that these persons were Jews by birth, and had been taken captive by the Romans, and then set at liberty, and hence called "freed men," or "Libertines." That there were many Jews of this description, cannot be doubted. Pompey, when he subjugated Judea, sent large numbers of the inhabitants to Rome, who were afterwards liberated, and a residence assigned to them beyond the Tiber. These persons were called by Philo, "Libertines," or freed men. 3. But, another, and more feasible opinion is, that they took their name from some place which they occupied; an idea which derives probability from the fact, that the other individuals mentioned in the same category are designated by the countries which they occupied. Suidas declares that it is the name of a place. The Cyrenians were Jews who inhabited Cyrene, a celebrated city of Libya, where a great number resided, and who were accustomed to send their several offerings to Jerusalem. They had a synagogue in that city, and some were among the earliest converts to the faith of Christ. Hence we read of Simon of Cyrene, whom the Jews compelled to bear our Saviour's cross; of Lucius of Cyrene, a celebrated Teacher in the church of Antioch; and of "men of Cyrene," who, upon the persecution that followed the death of Stephen, were "scattered abroad" from Jerusalem, and preached "as far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch." (Acts xi. 19, 20.) The synagogue of the Alexandrian Jews is mentioned in the Talmud, which states that they built it at their own charge, which was probably true in other cases. They were inhabitants of Alexandria, in Egypt, which was founded by Alexander the Great, B.C. 332, and peopled by colonies of Greeks and Jews. It was much celebrated, and contained not less than three hundred thousand free citizens, and as many slaves. The city was inhabited by many Jews; and Josephus † asserts that the founder assigned to them a particular quarter of the city, and allowed them equal privileges with the Greeks. Philo affirms, that of five parts of the city, into which it may be supposed divided, the Jews occupied two; and that, in his time, there dwelt at Alexandria and in other Egyptian towns, not less than two hundred thousand of the descendants of Israel. The Cilicians were from a province of Asia Minor, on the sea coast, at the north of Cyprus. The chief town was Tarsus, the birth-place of Paul the Apostle, who, probably, took a principal part in these discussions against Stephen, as a member of that synagogue. The term "Asia," as used with regard to another class of Stephen's disputants, is employed in a very limited sense, distinguishing it from Phrygia, Galatia, Bithy-

* Annales, lib. ii., cap. 85. Edit. Grierson. Dublin. 1780.
† Joseph. Antiq., lib. xiv., cap. 7.

nia, and Mysia. The name had anciently various significations. There was Asia in the more extensive sense, denoting all that was known of the East; then a comparatively small, but to those of former time well-known, part, designated Asia Minor; and of this limited division a portion was denominated Asia, and, when distinction was required, it was recognised as Asia Proper. This comprehended the provinces of Phrygia, Mysia, Caria, Lydia, Æolia, and Ionia. But the scene of the Apostles' ministry will be found in the Lydian Asia, which formed but a small part of Asia Proper. It is in this restricted sense that St. John uses the word, when addressing "the seven churches which are in Asia." (Rev. i. 11.)

Being overcome with the power of the Spirit, these men gave over disputing, and a new plan of attack was adopted. False witnesses were hired, who accused Stephen of "speaking blasphemous words against Moses and against God;" and of saying, that "Jesus of Nazareth should destroy that place, and change the customs which Moses had delivered." We can hardly suppose, that even the Apostles were aware at this time, that the Gospel was to supplant the religion of Moses; still less could we imagine, that Stephen would have spoken blasphemously of Moses or of God. But while he was enforcing the indispensable necessity of faith in Christ's death, he may have given offence to many Jews, who thought, that, as followers of the law, they could not be excluded from salvation. He would also be sure to represent Moses as inferior to Jesus; and to those who knew the latter only as a crucified Galilæan, the assertion would be looked upon as little less than blasphemy. When the Chief Priests represented the doctrines of the Apostles as subversive of the law, they struck upon a chord which vibrated to the heart of every Israelite. The Pharisees would even have been more forward than the Sadducees to resent an insult such as this; and the High Priest and his followers could not have devised a plan more likely to unite all parties against the Christians; nor could there have been a fitter time for spreading this new calumny, than when persons were entering Jerusalem every day, who had as yet heard nothing of the rising sect. If some Jewish accounts may be believed, Gamaliel himself was no longer the advocate of cautious measures. It is possible, that, as a rigid Pharisee, and even upon his own principle, he may have looked upon it as a proof that the counsel of the Apostles was not of God, since they blasphemed Moses and the law.* With this charge, Stephen's accusers hurried him before the High Priest and Elders: they "brought him to the council."

The court having been set, and the charge brought in and opened, that nothing might be wanting to conduct this mock exhibition of justice, Stephen was permitted to defend himself. While the Judges of the Sanhedrim earnestly gazed upon him, they discovered the appearance of an extraordinary splendour and brilliancy in his countenance, as indicative of the innocence and rectitude of his cause. The High Priest having asked him whether he were guilty or not, the holy confessor pleaded his own cause, undaunted by the assembly of

* Burton's Lectures upon the Eccles. Hist. of the First Century. 8vo. Edit. p. 67.

the wise and learned and powerful of his nation, and cheered by the consciousness of the presence of the Great High Priest of our profession. In this address he went through a summary of the Jewish history, showing God's free mercies to the nation, and the return which it had made by rebellion and idolatry. He showed them, among other apostacies, how their fathers had forsaken the tabernacle of Jehovah, and taken up the tabernacle of Moloch. This brought him to the mention of the temple, which they, although no longer idolaters, yet regarded with a carnality little short of idolatry.* With the usual abuse of superstition, they confined God's presence on earth to that favoured spot, and only there thought of the purity necessary for appearing before him: nowhere else did they reck of his eye. Here, too, of course, it consisted but in outward rites and oblations. In vain had Prophets been sent from God to recall them to more spiritual notions: they persecuted and slew them, both them who spoke of the coming of the Just One, and the Just One himself. Their menaces, during the latter part of his speech, when he came to the subject of the temple, were very significant; and, perhaps, drew him to dilate more at large on their resistance to God's will: he saw that he himself was shortly to be added to the number of His maltreated messengers, and burst out into that indignant apostrophe, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the Prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have now been the betrayers and murderers; who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."† On this, the rage of his hearers became excessive; they were cut to the heart, and interrupted Stephen in the progress of his discourse with clamour and boisterous tumult; who, seeing them gnashing upon him with their teeth, and aware of what was preparing for him, lifted his heart above all earthly fears, and, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, as ready to receive this champion of the faith, when the trammels of mortality shall be violently taken away.

The appearance of this vision is monitory and consoling. Two circumstances, says the Rev. Richard Watson, are here recorded. The fact that he was "full of the Holy Ghost," being again mentioned, intimates that he had, in that moment, a special visitation of divine strength and comfort. The moment was a trying one. His enemies were numerous, and their rage was great; so that from them he could expect no mercy. Then the visitation was granted. How often does this interesting circumstance of the seasonable interposition of God, in behalf of his servants, appear in the New Testament! Hence, St. Paul remarks, that, while his outward afflictions abounded, his consolations by Christ abounded in proportion. "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and

* Sancti Barnabæ Apostoli Epist. Catholica. Sect. xii. 4to. Paris, 1645.
† Evans's Scripture Biography, p. 340. London, 1834.

patience experience, and experience hope ; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." Similar instances occur in the Old Testament. When the three Hebrew children were cast alive into the burning fiery furnace, "one like unto the Son of God" appeared amongst them, so that not a hair of their heads was singed, nor did the smell of fire pass upon their clothes. When St. John was banished to the Isle of Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, he was favoured with the presence of his glorified Lord, and of the holy angels. All these facts are designed to teach us, that, if we trust in the Lord, mercy shall compass us about ; and that he is, as it is emphatically expressed, "a very present help in trouble." The immediate effect of this visitation was, that "he looked up stedfastly unto heaven ;" not attracted by the vision, which appears to have been vouchsafed afterwards, while he was looking up. The action carries its own comment. It was an appeal from the injustice of earth, to the eternal justice of heaven ; from merciless men, to a compassionate God. It was a devout committal of his cause into a supreme hand ; saying "If it be right for me to be delivered, thou canst deliver me ; no rage of man can prevent this. If it be thy will that I should die, behold, here I am : do with me as seemeth thee good." Can we not here catch an illustrious view of the manner in which true Christianity lifts man above himself ; and how lofty a character is stamped upon a regenerate nature? A man, whose eye is fixed on heaven, tramples equally under foot the smiles and the frowns of earth. Here is no defiance, no collecting of a man's resisting energies, resting on the centre of a dogged resolution ; which is all that heathen virtue can reach. Here is no retreating of man into himself, in search of natural courage, or other principles to sustain him. The contrast is most impressive. In Christian heroism, man goes out of himself to a higher power ; his strength is in his weakness ; he trusts in another, an almighty power ; and thus confesses that he can do nothing. Stephen looks directly up into heaven ; commits his case there, and becomes mighty through God.* "How easily can heaven delight and entertain us in the want of all earthly comforts ! and how near are divine consolations, when human assistance is furthest from us !"

Stephen was elated with this glorious manifestation, and his soul inspired with renewed courage and zeal, so that he cried out in the presence of the assembly, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." The application to Jesus (for so they could not but understand it) of that high title, which when Jesus himself made, the High Priest rent his clothes as at blasphemy, and pronounced sentence of death, was also fatal to his faithful servant. The furious and misguided bigotry of the mob knew no bounds ! They did not wait to procure a warrant from the Roman Governor, without whose leave they had not power to put any man to death,—they had not even prudence to wait for the judicial sentence of the Sanhedrim, which would, most probably, have been

* Watson's Works. Vol. ii., p. 422. 8vo. Edit. London, 1834.

given against the persecuted and injured man; but, seizing the sword of justice with a determination to use it, without waiting for any of the ordinary formalities of law, like fanatics and madmen, they raised a great clamour, and stopped their ears that they might hear no further blasphemies, and be deaf to all appeals for mercy; they rushed upon him; and, as zeal is superstitious, even in its wildest and most frantic rage, the mob hesitated to shed the blood of Stephen within the walls, lest they should pollute the city with his blood, but hurried him without, and stoned him, while he was invoking Jesus in the same prayer in which he himself had invoked the Father from the cross, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He knelt down to receive his death, and crying out, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!" he fell asleep.

Thus Stephen fell, and his death is highly instructive. It was a death of *prayer*. He died calling upon God. He needed prayer to the end, because to the end he needed divine support. No former grace which he had received was then sufficient; and no visions with which he might have been favoured, could supersede the necessity of direct communications of divine help and comfort. It was a death of *faith*. Christ was recognised by the dying martyr, and into his hands the soul was commended. The soul of Stephen had been thus committed to the merit of the Saviour's passion for justification; it had been committed to his care through life; and Christ was acknowledged as the Saviour, the only Saviour, of souls in death. The language of St. Paul was very similar: "I know," says he, "whom I have believed; and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." It was a death of *certainty*. In the mind of Stephen, there was no gloom as to the future: the death of the Christian is, the surrender of his spirit into the hands of his glorified Saviour. What a thought is this! View the language of Stephen in contrast with that of even the wisest of the Heathen, and especially with that of unbelievers. "And now, O ye Judges," said Socrates, "ye are going to live, and I am going to die. Which of these is best, God knows, but I suppose no man does." "I am going to take a leap in the dark!" exclaimed an infidel in the prospect of dissolution. The despairing sinner, who has neglected the salvation of the Gospel, trembles at the sight of the great gulf; and many unfaithful professors of Christianity, in their last hours, have painful doubts as to whether they shall sink or rise. The vision made no difference in the case of Stephen. St. Paul saw no vision, and yet he employs the same language of blessed assurance. It was a death of *charity*. The man of God was surrounded by fierce and bloody men, who were inflicting upon him the greatest injury in their power; yet a soul ripe for heaven can have no resentments; and he cries with a loud voice, expressive, not only of a forgiving spirit, but of the utmost ardour of benevolence, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!" thus exemplifying the doctrine of his Lord, "I say unto you, Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." It was a death of *peace*. He fell asleep. So easy is death to the good man. He

possessed the most perfect calmness in the midst of violence, and an expression of that tranquillity was, perhaps, left upon the countenance of his breathless remains.*

No information is contained in the Holy Scriptures, either with respect to the time of his death, or the place of his interment.† The martyrdom, in all probability, occurred a short time after the ascension of our Lord, without the walls, as tradition reports, near the gate on the north side that leads to Cedar, afterwards termed St. Stephen's Gate; it was anciently called the Gate of Ephraim, or, according to others, the Valley Gate, or Fish Gate; it stood on the east side of the city, where the place, until lately, was exhibited, where St. Paul sat when he kept the clothes of them that slew him. Over this place, the Empress Eudocia, wife of Theodosius, when she repaired the walls of Jerusalem, erected a beautiful and stately church‡ to the honour of Stephen, wherein she herself was afterwards buried. The great stone upon which he stood while he suffered martyrdom, is said to have been afterwards removed into the church, built to the honour of the Apostles, upon Mount Sion, and there kept with great care and reverence: one of the stones with which he was killed, being also preserved by some Christian, was carried into Italy, laid up as a choice treasure at Ancona, and a church erected to the memory of the martyr. In the fifth century, the relics of the martyr were said to have been miraculously discovered by a Greek Priest, of the name of Lucian,§ and they were brought to Europe by Orosius. Evodius, Bishop of Myala, wrote a small treatise concerning the miracles performed by them; and Severus, a Bishop of the Island of Minorca, wrote a circular letter of the conversion of the Jews in that island, and of the miracles wrought in that place, by the relics which Orosius left there. These writings are contained in the works of Augustine, who gives the sanction of his authority to the incredible and ludicrous follies which they record. To this power the Church of Rome still pretends, which it endeavours to justify by appealing to these and similar instances. But in vain, and to no purpose: the pretended miracles of that Church being generally trifling and ridiculous, far beneath that gravity and seriousness that should work upon a wise and considerate mind, the manner of their operation obscure and ambiguous, their numbers excessive and immoderate, the occasions of them light and frivolous; and, after all, the things themselves, for the most part, false, and the reports very often so monstrous and extravagant as would choke any sober and rational belief, so that a man must himself become the greatest miracle that believes them. I shall observe no more, says Dr. Cave,‖ than that in

* Watson's Works. Vol. ii., p. 428. 8vo. Edit. London, 1834.

† The story is worthy of little attention, that the body of Stephen continued a day and a night without interment; during which time it was not touched by any animal, and that at length, Gamaliel was instrumental in having it buried in his own ground, eight leagues from Jerusalem. (Tillemont, Memoires, tom. ii., p. 9. Paris, 1694.

‡ Evagr. Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 22.

§ Luciani Presbyteri Epistola de Inventione S. Stephani.

‖ Cave's Lives of the Fathers of the Church. 8vo. Edit. Vol. i., p. 76. Oxford, 1840.

all these cases related by Augustine, we never find that they invocated or prayed to the martyr, nor begged to be healed by his merits or intercession, but immediately directed their addresses to God himself.*

The circumstances which preceded and attended the condemnation and death of Stephen, were entirely tumultuary and irregular, and offer no ground whatever for us to infer, that a proper course of authorized proceeding was adopted. The enraged mob took the matter into their own hands, without waiting the result of judicial proceedings. The effect is the same, whether we affirm or deny the power of the Jewish council to inflict capital punishment; for if they had such power, it seems evident that they did not in this instance exercise it, since the excited mob would not wait for their judicial determination. By some this has been quoted as an evidence, that the Sanhedrim was not, as is usually stated, at this time, without the power of inflicting the punishment of death. The instance proves nothing either way. The question, however, has given rise to considerable discussion. Relying on the present and other cases, some contend that the Jewish tribunal did really possess the power of inflicting capital punishment; and the case of our Saviour, whom the Jews could not put to death until they had obtained the concurrence of the Roman Governor, is met by the observation that they wished to avoid the odium of so unpopular an act themselves, and to throw it upon

* The relics of Stephen were found, together with those of Nicodemus, and those of Gamaliel, and of Abibas, his son. They were found by the help of revelations and visions, and they wrought innumerable miracles. Tillemont (Memoires, tom. ii., p. 1, *et seq.*) calls it one of the principal events of the fifth century, and gives a large detail of it, which well deserves to be perused; for, take it all together, it is, perhaps, one of the most barefaced and impudent impostures that ever was obtruded upon the Christian world. The vouchers for it are Lucian, a Presbyter of the church of Jerusalem, who was the happy discoverer of these relics, Augustine, Sozomen, Orosius, Gregory of Tours, and many others. "Dr. Cave is not willing to give the same credence to modern miracles, as to those which they say were performed in the days of Honorius. He seems inclined to allow, that a great number of sick persons were cured by the admirable odour which issued from the sepulchre of St. Stephen, when it was first opened, if we may believe Lucian and Photius. But he is much more persuaded of the relation given us by St. Augustine, concerning the miracles wrought in a chapel where some relics of Stephen were deposited. Cave is of opinion, that God might perform such miracles at that time, for the conversion of the Pagans, who were still numerous amongst the Christians; though at present, miracles are ceased, because there is not the same occasion for them. The author of the 'Logic of Port Royal,' speaking of these miracles, affirms, that every man of good sense, though he should not have a grain of piety or religion, must needs acknowledge them to be true. But a man may have both good sense and piety too, and yet may rather believe that Augustine was mistaken and credulous, or, that he judged it expedient to propagate miraculous tales, which he thought calculated to convert the Pagans, without examining them too strictly. It is true, indeed, that he relates them with the utmost confidence; and, with the same confidence, the most notorious impostures are still recommended to our belief every day." Du Pin, speaking of these miracles, says: "These relations have in them so little of the probable and the credible, that if they were not authorized by the testimony of Augustine and Gennadius, we would scarcely believe them." "A phial, filled with the blood of St. Stephen, brought to Naples by one Gaudioso, an African Bishop, used to boil and bubble of itself on the 3d of August, according to the old calendar. But since Gregory XIII. has corrected the calendar, the blood does not boil up till the 13th of August, on which the festival of the saint is fixed by the new regulation. A manifest proof," says the writer, "that the Gregorian calendar is received in heaven, though some heretical countries upon earth refused to follow it!" (Jortin's Remarks, &c. Vol. ii., pp. 204, 205. Edit. 8vo. London, 1846.)

the Romans; to which end they accused him of a political offence, sedition, which it is allowed that the Romans doubtless reserved for their own tribunal. But to this is opposed the confession of all the Jewish writers, that their great council lost this power before the time of our Lord's death, though they differ as to the mode in which it was lost; and this may seem conclusive, when taken in connexion with the avowal of the Jews themselves, before Pilate, that it was not lawful for them to put any man to death. It is true that this declaration might, if it stood alone, be open to a restrictive interpretation, as implying that they might not put any one to death accused of sedition, or, under the peculiar circumstances of the case. But some of the explanations given of this are also untenable,—such as, that they meant to say it was unlawful for them to put any man to death at the festival; for this, neither the letter nor spirit of the law of Moses made illegal: and even with regard to what is inferred from the charge of sedition and treason, it is forgotten that they only made this charge as a last resort, after they found that Pilate was unwilling to allow of Christ's death on the charge of blasphemy. Furthermore, an important circumstance has been entirely overlooked; namely, that the two thieves who were crucified with Christ, were certainly condemned by the Romans, otherwise they would not have been crucified: hence we find that the Jews could not punish theft or robbery without the concurrence of the Romans. Resisting the temptation of examining the question more largely, we shall only observe, that all other considerations which bear against the conclusion that the Sanhedrim possessed the power of punishing with death, are strongly supported by any reference to the character and constitution of a Roman province, and the powers of the person to whom its government was intrusted. In all states the power of life and death is an attribute of sovereignty, exercised only by the reigning power, or by those specially commissioned as its administrators. So it was among the Romans. The power rested primarily in the Emperor, and was by him delegated to his representatives in the provinces. But these representatives could not re-delegate their power to other persons, or to tribunals inferior to their own, while they were themselves in the provinces which they governed. No evidence has been offered to show that this power in a province was possessed by any other tribunal than that of the Governor, or by any tribunal jointly with his. Indeed, even as a first impression, it would appear most unlikely that the Romans, however disposed to favour the Jews, should have left to them the exercise of this most essential function of sovereign power. The relative position and character of the Romans and Jews would alone render this supposition replete with difficulties, which no explanation can obviate.

The Jewish council appears, however, to have been permitted to retain the power of trying and punishing offences not capital, and particularly ecclesiastical offences. Indeed, it seems that it possessed the power of trying and passing sentence even in capital cases, as in the instance of our Saviour; but their sentence had no force until the case had been re-examined, and the sentence confirmed, by the Roman

Governor. Their decision on such cases practically amounted to a conclusion, to denounce the criminal to the Governor as one deserving of death. We incline to think, that they were allowed this privilege only with respect to offences against their own law; the Romans taking entire charge of those against the public peace. The Jews, probably, found it difficult to persuade their Governors to consent to inflict the punishment of death upon blasphemers, Sabbath-breakers, and others, which may have rendered the people all the more ready, as in the present and other instances, to take the punishment into their own hands.*

Dr. Lardner is still more explicit: Here is not only a man, he observes, brought before the council, and witnesses heard; but he is put to death, by stoning, an ordinary Jewish punishment, without any mention of his being prosecuted before a Roman Magistrate. It has, in the conclusion, very much the appearance of a legal Jewish punishment; for the witnesses seem to have stoned him, or thrown the first stone at him. The sacred historians are not accountable for the legality of the facts or proceedings which they relate. Though this affair should be allowed to have all the forms of a legal process, sentence and punishment according to the Jewish law and customs, yet it does not follow that it was rightful, according to the constitution they were then under. It is certain that Magistrates do sometimes transgress the bounds of their authority, as well as that people commit disorders. We have a plain instance of this at Philippi, (Acts xvi.,) where the Magistrates commanded Paul and Silas to be beaten and imprisoned. But in this sudden passion, they acted very irregularly, of which they were soon sensible. And it is not impossible but the Jewish council at Jerusalem, in compliance with their own malice and the clamours of the people, might pronounce a sentence that exceeded the bounds of their authority, and execute it, before the Roman officer could come in to prevent it.

This might be said, supposing there were present the complete form of a legal process, which we think there is not. It is true, here were witnesses, and they bring their charge; but here is no sentence pronounced by the council, not one word of it; nor does the High Priest collect the opinions. If this had been done, it is not likely that St. Luke would have omitted it. In the account of the proceedings against our Saviour, (Matt. xxvi. 66; Mark xiv. 64,) particular mention is made of the High Priest's asking the council their opinion, "What think ye?" and of the answer they made, "He is guilty of death." St. Luke (chap. xxii. 71) has given the result of their debates: "And they said, What need we any further witnesses? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth." In the cases recorded, Acts iv. 1, *et seq.*, and v. 17—40, the Evangelist informs us, not only of the accusations against the prisoners, and the defence they made, but of the debates of the council after the prisoners had been heard. These were ordered to go aside, then follow debates, the final resolution is taken; afterwards the prisoners are recalled, and the sentence pronounced.

* Illustrated Commentary. Vol. v., pp. 177, 178. London, 1841.

In the present instance, after the witnesses which they had suborned had delivered their accusations, "then said the High Priest," "Are these things so?" (Acts vii. 1;) that is, he gave Stephen leave to speak for himself. If, after Stephen had concluded, the council had ordered him to go out; or, if there had been any debates in the assembly concerning him, or the High Priest had asked their opinion, and a sentence had been pronounced, it is incredible that these things should have been omitted, as they are entirely. St. Luke briefly informs us, that, having heard what Stephen said, the multitude "gnashed on him with their teeth;" and that the martyr then "looked up to heaven, and said, I see the heavens opened, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him." This has all the appearance of a tumultuous proceeding of the people, which the council, probably, had no inclination to check; for of them we must understand the words, "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth;" words which represent ungovernable rage.

Stephen is apparently convicted, not upon the evidence of the witnesses, but upon his saying, "I see the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." "Then they cried out," &c. His expressions were termed blasphemous; and in this case the Jewish people made no scruple of stoning a man immediately, without a trial. Several instances of this occur in the New Testament. (John v. 17, 18; viii. 58, 59; x. 30—39.) Putting Stephen to death by stoning is no proof that sentence had been pronounced, or that any legal form was observed in his death. This was common in their tumultuous outbreaks. Jesus having said some things which had given offence, "the Jews took up stones to stone him." He proceeded to reason with them. They "answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy." (John x. 31, 33; xi. 7, 8.) The stoning which Paul suffered at Lystra was altogether turbulent and irregular. (Acts xiv. 19.)*

Stoning was probably the only capital punishment ordered by Moses. The Rabbins tell us, that when a man was condemned to death, he was led out of the city, an officer going before him with a pike in his hand, at the top of which was a linen cloth to render it distinguishable from afar, and that those who might have anything to offer in favour of the criminal, might propose it. If no one offered, he was conducted to the place of execution, and exhorted to acknowledge and confess his fault, because those who confess their sins have a part in the life to come. After this he was executed. Lapidation was performed in two ways. The former mode was when stones were thrown upon the guilty person until he died, the witnesses casting the first stone. In the latter, the criminal was brought to a steep place, in height exceeding that of two men, whence one of the witnesses cast him headlong, and the other rolled a large stone

* Lardner's Works, vol. i., p. 60, *et seq.* 8vo. edit. London, 1831. See also Biscoe's History of the Acts of the holy Apostles. 8vo. edit. Oxford, 1840.

upon his body. If he did not die by the fall from the rock, he was despatched by throwing stones upon him from above. We are informed that after a criminal had suffered the extreme penalty of the law by stoning, having been convicted of idolatry or blasphemy, they fastened his body to a stake by tying his hands together, and so left him until sunset, when they buried him, with the stake to which he was fastened, in the valley of carcasses. When an individual was stoned by the mob, as was the case with Stephen, then brutal rage armed every man; justice was set aside, and the will and fury of the people were law, judge, jury, and executioner.

The persecution which commenced at the death of Stephen lasted, it is supposed, about four years. The disciples were much harassed by the Jewish council from the beginning; but now, after the martyrdom of Stephen, a more open and violent attack was made upon Christianity. Pontius Pilate, whose government among the Jews had become very feeble and inert, had been recently superseded: previous to this taking place, his notorious misrule had tended, in a considerable degree, to encourage various acts of violence and oppression. The same persecution probably extended to the last year of the reign of Caligula, when Petronius, according to a command which he had received, erected the Emperor's statue in the temple at Jerusalem, an act of sacrilege which threw the inhabitants of Judea into such general consternation and displeasure, as fully to employ them about their own affairs, without giving them any further time to interfere concerning those of their neighbours.

In the commencement of this outbreak of popular distaste against the religion of the Redeemer, the services of such a zealous agent as Saul of Tarsus were not to be neglected by the Chief Priests. We may perhaps infer that Gamaliel himself did not now oppose the ardour of his former pupil; and the watch-word of the temple and the law being in danger, was sufficient to raise a ferment from one end of Jerusalem to the other. Many believers, who had never viewed the matter in this light, might perhaps begin to doubt of their newly-adopted faith; the suspicions of those who had hesitated or wavered before, would be strengthened; and, in the meantime, both Pharisees and Sadducees were active in prejudicing others against the Christians. The success of the attempt against Stephen showed the policy of attacking the leaders of the party. The places where they assembled would be easily discovered; and the panic, which attends any great popular movement, would cause many of the believers to hide themselves from the storm. Saul and his party succeeded in laying hold of some who were less cautious; and they either lodged them in the prisons, or, bringing them into the synagogues, which were sure to be filled with the foreign Jews, they ordered them to abjure their doctrines on pain of instant punishment. The necessity of yielding to circumstances was apparent. It was decided that the Apostles should remain in Jerusalem, and endeavour, if they could, to protect their converts; but that the Deacons, and the others who had taken a prominent part in public discussions, should leave the city. Nicolas, one of the Deacons, was a native of Antioch: Philip appears

to have resided at Cæsarea; some of those who fled with them belonged to Cyprus and Cyrene, so that if many of them returned to their homes, the persecution was, in fact, the cause of the Gospel being more widely spread. It was carried by some as far as Phenicia, Antioch, and Cyprus; but the immediate result was the conversion of several persons in the nearer places of Judea and Samaria.* This accession to the church may be attributed to several causes, such as, the patience and fortitude of the disciples, their discretion in avoiding needless offence, their zeal and intrepidity in asserting the resurrection of Jesus, and other fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, and also to the exercise of miraculous powers with which they were largely endowed. During this sanguinary and often tumultuous persecution, Nicanor, the Deacon, and above two thousand other believers, suffered martyrdom for the Christian faith, in and about Jerusalem.

In comparing the circumstances of the death of this blessed protomartyr, with those which attended Zechariah,† the first thing which strikes us is, their different fruits. A mournful solitude and barrenness surrounds the fate of Zechariah. We are not told of any bright vision which cheered him; and his blood seems to have flowed in vain, to have been shed as seed upon the barren sand. He had no followers; his death was the herald of the destruction of his country, but wrought no spiritual regeneration. It prophesied the downfal of the law; but Stephen's helped the rising of the Gospel. His blood fell on the fat soil of God's vineyard of the church, and among his murderers was its future most efficient Apostle. The death of Zechariah drove the faithful servants of God to hiding-places and silence; but that of Stephen, by scattering his companions, sent Preachers of the word into all corners of the world. The blow, in the one case, drove the waters, as in a circumscribed pool, to break fruitlessly upon the shingle; but in the other, like the impression of the heavenly bodies on the wide ocean, it sent the waters rolling away in every direction to far distant regions. The end of Stephen is no less contrasted with Zechariah's, than its effects. It is full of exulting triumph; it partakes of the splendour of Elijah's ascension. Here is no dark and mournful solitude; the glory of God, which had guided Israel, which surrounded Christ upon the Mount, which formed his chariot of ascent into paradise, is revealed to his eyes amid the opening heavens, and in the midst of it appears the triumphant Saviour ready to receive into bliss the departing spirit of his servant. The death of Zechariah was that of a true son of the Lion of Judah; he resisted unto blood, and died amid struggling defiance, and in the bold utterance of the commission of denunciation with which he had been charged: "The Lord look upon it, and require it." But the death of Stephen is that of a follower of the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world. He fell asleep with the words, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," upon his lips. His last words were nearly those of the blessed Lamb himself, who cried, "Father, forgive them, for

* Burton's Lectures upon Eccles. Hist., p. 72. Edit. 8vo. Oxford, 1831.

† Vide supra, pp. 51, 52.

they know not what they do." Both suffered most cruel injustice at the hands of their fellow-countrymen, dying the death of idolaters for declaring the will and word of the only and ever-living God. But a shade of melancholy overspreads the martyrdom of Zechariah, and a gladness relieves the gloom of Stephen's. Stephen was still in communion with his countrymen, and when he came into the temple worshipped the same God, joined in the same prayer, partook of the same sacrifice. But Zechariah, when he came into the temple, found none but apostates; saw the altars of God overthrown, and the courts thronged with the votaries of Moloch and Baal. Stephen had to complain of their corrupting the law; Zechariah, of their abolishing it. Stephen spoke to men who abused their knowledge; Zechariah, to those who had cast it away. Stephen spoke to men, many of whom, perhaps, and most assuredly at least one, had the zeal of God, though not the true knowledge; but Zechariah, to a throng who, in despite of late signal mercies, had, with their King at their head, conspicuously abandoned him, displaying thus an utter debasement of mind, a serpent-like ingratitude, a fiendish malignity. Stephen, therefore, might hope for converts; Zechariah could hope for none. Stephen's blood fell like dew, watering and fattening; but Zechariah's was as that of Abel, crying for vengeance, and fell on the floor of the temple like the showers of brimstone and fire upon Sodom.* Well has Dr. Clarke observed, "The martyrdom of Stephen, and the spirit in which he suffered, have for eighteen hundred years been an honour to the cause for which he cheerfully gave up his life. While Christianity endures,—and it will endure till time is swallowed up in eternity,—the martyrdom of Stephen will be the model, as it has been, for all martyrs, and a cause of triumph to the church of God."

SECT. II. THE MARTYRDOM OF JAMES THE ELDER.

James, the brother of John the Evangelist, and son of Zebedee and of Mary, surnamed Salome, who was cousin-german to Mary the mother of our Lord, was a Galilean, a native of Capernaum, or Bethsaida; his father was a fisherman, who maintained a number of servants in his employment, and was in partnership with Simon Peter; (Luke v. 10;) he was surnamed the "Elder," or the "Great," to distinguish him from another Apostle of the same name, who filled the office of Bishop of Jerusalem, and was termed the "Less," probably, on account of his being lower in stature, or his being junior in point of age. Jesus had but recently returned into Galilee, after having experienced among his own kinsmen and acquaintance at Nazareth, the first manifestation of the almost universal rejection of his countrymen. Accompanied by a large concourse of people which crowded around him, he came to the shores of the lake of Gennesaret, and, to relieve himself from the pressure of the multitude, he entered the boat of Peter, where he sat, and taught the people as they stood and listened on the brink. In company with

* Burton's Lectures upon Eccles. Hist., p. 72. Edit. 8vo. Oxford, 1831.

this vessel was the fishing-boat of Zebedee, containing his sons, James and John. Our Lord having summoned Peter and Andrew to "follow him," he afterwards called the sons of Zebedee for a similar purpose; and so rejoiced were they at this command, that they immediately threw away their nets, quitted their father, and followed Jesus: they held no consultation, they did not hesitate, they neither raised nor imagined any difficulties, they contemplated neither consequences nor dangers, but constituted the sacrifice which they had to make, as far as human aid was necessary thereto, perfect and complete. Zebedee appears to have approved of their resolution, and Salome devoted all her energies to the service of their common Master.

Owing to the early removal of James from a scene of persecution and suffering, but little is recorded relating to his personal history in the inspired writings. In the course of our Lord's ministry, he was chosen, with eleven others, to be an Apostle, from whom also he received on this occasion, and in common with his brother John, the surname of Boanerges,* or "sons of thunder." This appellation could not refer, as some have imagined, to the hasty and impetuous disposition of the brothers, of which, however, but one instance is given, and that one rather of mistaken zeal than natural ardour; and it is not at all probable that our Lord would perpetuate the remembrance of an infirmity which his divine grace was to cure, even did it exist, by affixing it upon them with their new name. Neither can this designation be applicable to their manner of preaching. That of John appears from his writings to have been as sweet and as attractive as his disposition, and the reverse of either loud, stentorian declamation, or the hurling of the flaming thunderbolts of the divine threatenings. From what little appears of James's character, he filled his high office with "meekness of wisdom," and stands forth as a calm, rather than an impetuous, man. The reason of the appellation is probably drawn from the truth of which they were to be such eminent Ministers, rather than their own mode of preaching.† The thunder is the Gospel itself, the public voice of God in the world, moving and shaking the minds of men, wherever proclaimed; and when James and John are termed "sons of thunder," the meaning is, that they should rank among the greatest instruments of sounding forth the voice of God, the authoritative declaration of his will contained in the revelation of his Son, and cause the "glad tidings" of salvation to be heard through the world like thunder from one end of the sky to the other. Most effectually did these brothers cause the intimation of our Lord to be realized. It is singular that they were the first and the last in their deaths of all the apostolic company. James shed the first drops of that blood, which has been called the seed of the church; and John, before his death, in extreme old age, gave to the church that inspired record, the sound of which has gone forth into all the world, and shall never be silent.

* See the opinions of the Fathers in Suicer, under *βροντη*. That the term was applied as a rebuke, is inconsistent with the place in Mark iii. 17, where it appears.

† Watson's Exposition, *in loco*.

It was not long after the election of James to the apostolate, that the martyrdom of the Baptist occurred, which furnished an indubitable illustration of what the Saviour declared should befall his own Preachers. Calculated as this event was to produce a permanent impression on the minds of the disciples, by convincing them that it was not in the world that their services would be rewarded, and that "tribulation" only might be expected, such impression was speedily obliterated. The sublime scene of the transfiguration fixed the eyes of the disciples so intently upon the Master's glory, that they were ever after, even up to his death, unprepared for his sufferings. A remarkable example of this blindness is related on the occasion of Jesus taking his disciples with him to Jerusalem for the last time. He told them that "the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the Chief Priests, and unto the Scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him;" (Matt. xx. 18, 19;) but, strange to say, the disciples did not understand him! So far from it, that the two sons of Zebedee urged their mother to ask, that they might sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his kingdom. Our Lord immediately replied, "Ye know not what ye ask." He not only reproved the request which they made, but also their ignorance of the true character of his kingdom, where the highest eminence was that of severe labours and painful sufferings, and, further, said he, "Are ye able to drink of the cup * that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" To this solemn and important question, they fearlessly answered, "We are able." They little conceived of the contents of that cup, or the nature of that baptism! They imagined that our Saviour was on his way to take possession of his kingdom, in which his Apostles should sit on twelve thrones, and their highest ambition was to occupy the most honourable. How literally were the words of our Lord fulfilled: "Ye shall indeed drink of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with!" Both were called to endure afflictions for the truth's sake, and thus drank of the same cup, and were baptized with the same baptism, though in a lower measure; for the sufferings of Christ were in themselves, as well as in their design, peculiar to himself. Unflinchingly they followed the track which was wet with their Master's blood, and meekly gave themselves up to indignity and shame, submitting to every humiliation for his sake, and after his example.

Numerous were the tokens of affectionate regard which were vouchsafed to James by his Lord and Master, as well as his brother and Peter, who were favourite disciples, with whom on several occasions he communicated exclusively. These three were chosen to be witnesses of some of the most remarkable events in the history of our

* It was formerly a custom at great entertainments for the governor of the feast to appoint to each of his guests the kind and proportion of wine which they were to drink, and to assign to every one his cup. Hence, both in sacred and profane writers, the cup is metaphorically used for the portion of good or evil that befalls men in life; but is more frequently used to express an evil or afflictive lot. The allusion in some passages appears to be to the empoisoned cup given to malefactors. (Jer. xlix. 12; Isai. li. 17.)

Lord. On the summit of Mount Tabor they beheld the bright shining cloud, the peculiar token of the Saviour's presence, which descended upon the mountain, and spread its fleecy folds around them, while they gazed upon their Master transfigured as the Lord of glory, attended by Moses and Elias, the representatives of the old and expiring dispensation. The same company were admitted into the house of Jairus to witness the resurrection of his daughter. Surrounded by this chosen band, the Saviour, sitting on Mount Olivet, gave utterance to those awful denunciations against Jerusalem, which in a short period of time met with a terrific accomplishment. The persecutions which James endured were but a significant indication of the fast-approaching fulfilment, and prepared the way for the erection of that spiritual temple, built upon the ruins of that of timber and stones, and which should last for ever. In the garden of Gethsemane James shared with his brother and Peter the mournful scene of the Saviour's agony. He witnessed the inexpressible anguish of a being "holy, harmless, and undefiled," about to undergo the wages of sin; he beheld him in earnest prayer to the Father, when, "being in an agony, his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Luke xxii. 44.) O how insignificant must have appeared every suffering which could befall himself, on the comparison with the sufferings of which he witnessed the outward tokens in Him! He must have hailed any affliction as a message from Him, and as bringing him back personally to his mind. It was one of his means of communion with him; and from the depth of this he could appreciate the height of glory which he should be called to share hereafter.*

Ecclesiastical writers are silent with regard to the employment of James subsequent to the ascension of our Lord. It is even more than probable that he left Judea shortly after the persecution that was raised at the martyrdom of Stephen. Jerome states that he preached the Gospel to the twelve tribes of the Jews in their dispersion; † and the Spanish historians inform us, that after having preached the word in Judea and Samaria, he journeyed into the western parts, and visited Spain, Britain,‡ and Ireland. Some Roman Catholic

* Scripture Biography. By the Rev. R. W. Evans, M.A. P. 222.

† *De Viris Illustribus.* The period of the death of James makes it quite impossible that he should have preached to the twelve tribes dispersed throughout the earth: the assertion was probably made from a mistaken notion that the General Epistle of St. James was written by this Apostle.

‡ This opinion has been supported by Alban Butler; but the authorities he has introduced are destitute of weight or importance. "That he preached there," says Butler, "is constantly affirmed by the tradition of that church, mentioned by St. Isidore, the Breviary of Toledo, the Arabic books of Anastasius, Patriarch of Antioch, concerning the passions of the martyrs and others." He further observes, that "Cupar, the Bollandist, traces this tradition very high, and confirms it from St. Jerome, St. Isidore, the ancient Spanish Office," &c. The writers to whom the Jesuit Cupar refers, are the Jesuit Flores, in his *España Sagrada de la Predicacion de San Jago in España*, and his answers to F. Mamachi, the Roman Dominican; the Jesuit Farlat, *Illyrici Sacri Prolegomena;* Cardinal d'Aguirre, *Conc. Hisp.* upon the words of Jerome in *Esaiam* cap. xxxiv. On the other side of the question we refer the reader to Baronius, who once supported the above hypothesis, but afterwards retracted his opinion. It is opposed by Estius, in Rom. xv. 20; Natalis Alexander, Diss. xiv. sect. 1. Tillemont says, "Toutes les Eglises d'Espagne prétendent qu'il a presché le premier dans ce

writers have favoured this conjecture, and say that as the Apostles during the first twelve years proclaimed the Gospel in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, James *might*, during that interval, make a voyage into Spain. The notion rests on no good foundation whatsoever, and even many Romish historians have demonstrated it to be utterly untrue. There can be no doubt, that, like the other Apostles, he preached in Judea and Galilee, and that his apostolical labours were confined to those countries.

It was about the year 44 that Saul went up to Jerusalem with contributions for the inhabitants of Judea, who were suffering extremely on account of famine. This visitation had been predicted at Antioch some time before, by a man named Agabus:* the Christians were enabled to send timely relief, they made a collection, which they forwarded to Jerusalem by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. They arrived in the metropolis of Judea about the time of the passover, in 44, which was the fourth year of the reign of Claudius; and the state of the church there would forcibly remind Saul of what had happened to himself at his last visit. Ten years had now elapsed since he had left Jerusalem, and the interval had been one of comparative rest to the Christians. The Jews, however, were now under a King, who might be said to be of their own nation; and they had succeeded in prejudicing him against the Christians. Herod Agrippa was in Rome at the time of Caligula's death, where he had been endeavouring to obtain the revocation of the edict which had ordered the erection of the Emperor's statue in the temple. The death of Caligula saved him any further trouble; and one of the first acts of the new Emperor Claudius was, to confirm to Agrippa the territories which he already possessed, with the addition of Judea, Samaria, and the district called Abilene; so that the kingdom of Agrippa now included all the countries over which his grandfather, Herod the

royaume. On ne voit point cependant qu'on en ait de preuve ni ancienne, ni authentique; et il s'y rencontre de grandes difficultez." (*Memoires*, tom. i., p. 347. Paris, 1693.) Pope Innocent I. disbelieved it also. (*Concil. Lat.*, vol. ii., p. 1245.) Moreri, in his *Dictionnaire Historique*, is decisive and clear. He says, "Les Espagnols, fondez sur je ne sai quelles traditions, prétendent avoir en Saint Jacques pour apôtre, bien qu'il n'y ait point d'auteur ancien qui l'ait écrit. L'Evêque de Compostelle, voulant alléguer ce voyage pretendu du Saint, pour défendre l'independance de son Eglise de celle de Toléde dans le grand Concile de Latran, sous Innocent III., ne put répondre aux puissantes raisons de Rodéric Ximénès son Archevêque, qui lui nia formellement ce voyage. Le Cardinal Baronius, qui dans ses remarques sur le martyrologe Romain, avoit soutenu cette tradition chimerique des Espagnols, etant depuis convaincu par beaucoup de raisons solidées fondées sur plusieurs Epitres des Papes, et sur divers témoignages d'auteurs célébres, changea de sentiment dans ses Annales, et improuva l'opinion des Espagnols."

* Some writers suppose that the famine was general; but most modern commentators unite in understanding, that the large terms of the original apply not to the whole world, nor even to all the Roman empire, but, as in Luke ii. 1, to Judea only. Statements respecting four famines, which occurred in the reign of Claudius, are produced by the commentators who support this view; and as all the countries put together would not make up a tenth part of even the Roman empire, they think it plain that the words must be understood to apply to that famine which, in the fourth year of Claudius, overspread Palestine. The poor Jews, in general, were then relieved by the Queen of Adiabene, who sent to purchase corn in Egypt for them; (Jos. Antiq., lib. xx., cap. 2, 6;) and for the relief of the Christians in that country, contributions were raised by the brethren at Antioch. (Kitto.)

Great, had swayed the sceptre. He also at the same time procured the small territory of Chalcis, with the title of King, for his brother Herod. This was in some sense, and for a few years, a restoration of independence to the Jews. Since the removal of Pontius Pilate, they had been governed by the President of Syria, instead of having a Procurator of their own.* They now had once more a King, who had some of the ancient Asmonean blood in his veins, and who, upon more than one occasion, had shown himself a real friend to the interests of the nation. His power appears to have been as despotic as that of his ancestor. He continued the Roman policy of frequently removing the High Priests; and his reign, which lasted not quite four years, saw three persons in succession fill that office.† By this measure, which might be thought an unpopular one, he was sure to have the person, who actually filled the office, at his command; and the others who were expecting it, would be careful not to offend him. Agrippa also found it convenient to secure the good-will of his subjects by yielding to their worst passions and caprice, especially as he was so narrowly watched by Marsus, the President of Syria; and it was no easy matter for a King of the Jews to be popular with his subjects, and yet to stand well with the Roman authorities in the country. One of the means which Agrippa took to make himself popular at Jerusalem, was by persecuting the Christians: and since he wished to be accounted particularly strict in his observance of the law, he would easily be persuaded that it was his duty to crush this increasing sect. As the passover was selected as the fittest season of the year for the crucifixion of our Lord, so that period is again chosen on which to perpetrate acts of cruelty, and to shed blood; and as the chief civil power was on the side of the ungodly, there was less difficulty in commencing and carrying on the attack. Agrippa began at once with seizing the ringleaders, and arrested James, whom he beheaded summarily, by his own military mandate, and without any process of Jewish law.‡ "Now about that time Herod the King stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also." (Acts xii. 1—3.) Thus fell the Apostle James, a victim to his open and steadfast testimony to the resurrection of Jesus, and to other services for the church, whereby he had greatly signalized himself in the short period of his life after our Lord's ascension. Probably he had, with a freedom not a little offensive to Agrippa, spoken of the calamities coming upon the Jewish people, if they did not repent, and believe in Jesus as the Christ, as John the Baptist and Stephen had declared in their preaching. (Matt. iii. 7—12; Luke iii. 17; Acts vi. 13, 14.) It is remarkable that the brunt of persecution came upon the three

* "Josephus speaks of Vitellius sending Marcellus, a friend of his own, to manage the affairs of Judea, when he ordered Pilate to Rome; (Antiq., lib. xviii. cap. 4, sect 2;) but I do not conceive him to have been Procurator." (Dr. E. Burton.)

† Simon, Matthias, Elioneus.

‡ Burton's Lectures upon the Ecclesiastical History of the First Century. 8vo. Oxford, 1831. Milman's History of Christianity, from the Birth of Christ to the Abolition of Paganism in the Roman Empire. Vol. i., p. 409. London, 1840.

favourite disciples of Jesus, inasmuch as their more intimate knowledge of him at once supplied them with a more abundant store of that which would provoke the wrath of the Jews, while, at the same time, it inspired them with greater boldness. Thus this blessed martyr fulfilled to the Lord his promise, in some degree at least, of drinking of the cup of which He drank, and of being baptized with the baptism that He had been baptized with.

Ancient tradition, as Eusebius informs us, on the authority of Clemens Alexandrinus, states, that the courage and constancy of James were such, as to induce the man who led him to the judgment-seat to confess himself a Christian. Both, therefore, says the historian, were led away to die. On the road to the place of martyrdom, he entreated James to forgive him; and the latter, considering a little, replied, "Peace be to thee," and kissed him, and then at the same time both were beheaded. In all probability James was buried at Jerusalem, where he suffered. With regard to the story of his body having been brought to Spain,* and of the miracles performed through it at the chapel of Compostella,† they present so much of the fabulous and romantic, that we are bound to recognise them only as intended to impose upon the credulous, and to impoverish the purses of those who are silly enough to credit them.

According to the testimony of Dorotheus, it is stated, that Nicanor, one of the seven Deacons, with two thousand others who believed in Christ, suffered on the same day as the proto-martyr Stephen. The same historian asserts, that Timon, another of the Deacons, afterwards Bishop of Bostra in Arabia, was there burned; and also Parmenas, a

* Surius, *De Probatis Sanctorum*, &c., whom Dr. Lightfoot terms the "bell-wether for old winter tales," informs us, that after the martyrdom of James, the body was shipped by Ctesiphon and his fellow-Bishops for Spain; that the ship, in six days, was directed thither, without pilot or compass, but only by the influence of the corpse that it carried; that at the landing, the body was taken up into the air, and carried near the place of its burial, twelve miles off; that Ctesiphon and his fellows were led to it by an angel, &c. But, enough.

† Alban Butler is a bird of the same feather as Surius, and tells us, that the body of the Apostle was interred at Jerusalem, but, not long after, carried by his disciples into Spain, and deposited at Iria Flavia, now called El Padron, upon the borders of Gallicia. The sacred relics were discovered there in the beginning of the ninth century, in the reign of Alphonsus the Chaste, King of Leon. By the order of that Prince they were translated to Compostella, four miles distant, to which place Pope Leo III. transferred the episcopal see from Iria Flavia. This place was first called Ad S. Jacobum Apostolum, or, Giacomo Postolo, which words have been contracted into the present name Compostella. It is famous for the extraordinary concourse of pilgrims that resort thither to visit the body of St. James, which is kept with great respect in the stately cathedral. Cupar the Bollandist proves the truth of the tradition of the Spanish church, concerning the body of St. James having been translated to Compostella, (that is, to the satisfaction of Butler,) and gives authentic histories of many miracles wrought through his intercession, and of several apparitions by which he visibly protected the armies of the Christians against the Moors in that kingdom. The military order of St. James, surnamed the Noble, was instituted by Ferdinand II., A.D. 1175. It is worthy of record, that Butler's only authority, which he deems it proper to mention, is Father Flores, an Austin Friar, and Rector of the Royal College of Alcala. *Verbum sat.* In the Acts and Monuments of John Foxe, mention is made "how Matilda, or Maud, daughter to King Henry, was married to Henry V., the Emperor of Germany; who, after the decease of the said husband, returned about this time, (A.D. 1125,) with the imperial crown to her father in Normandy, bringing with her the hand of St. James; for joy whereof, the King builded the Abbey of Reading, where the said hand was reposed." (Acts, &c., vol. ii., p. 180. Seeley's Edition. 1843.)

Deacon, sealed, at this time, the truth with his blood. Nevertheless, great uncertainty is necessarily connected with all these statements.*

Soon did Agrippa perceive that the murder of James was highly gratifying to the Jews, who rejoiced that the uncontrolled power of life and death was again restored to one who assumed the character of a national King. They were no longer restrained by the caprice, the justice, or the humanity of a Roman Prefect, who might treat their intolerance with contempt or displeasure; and they were encouraged in the hope, that at the same great festival, during which some years before they had extorted the death of Jesus from the reluctant Pilate, their new King would more readily lend himself to their revenge against his more active and powerful follower. Herod therefore determined to add still further to their pleasure by placing Peter within his power. This distinguished leader of the Christians was reserved for a kind of *auto da fé*, to be exhibited at the close of the passover; but a more powerful arm than that of Herod rescued Peter from his grasp, and made the tyrant feel that, when Jehovah touches them, the mightiest of the mighty "consume away like a moth." It was not long before divine vengeance overtook him. After the termination of the feast of the passover he returned to Cæsarea, for the purpose of celebrating public games in honour of Claudius Cæsar, whither he was attended with a splendid retinue, consisting of the most considerable persons of his own court, and also of the surrounding country. He appeared on the second morning of the spectacles at the theatre in a costly robe of silver tissue, artfully wrought, and so bright, that the sunbeams which darted upon it were reflected with such brilliancy as to dazzle the eyes of the gazing throng, and to impress them with a respect more than what was due to a created being. Here we behold him at one moment in a state of high dignity and glory, at another debased even to the dust! During his residence at Cæsarea, the Tyrians and Sidonians, whom he had threatened with war for some offence, sent a deputation to him, professing submission, and deprecating his anger. Through the influence of the King's Chamberlain, they obtained the desired reconciliation, and the plan of contemplated hostilities was abandoned. But Herod, for the gratification of his own excessive vanity, by a pompous display of his greatness, gave a public audience to the Ambassadors, and endeavoured to fix deep in their minds an idea of his abilities, magnificence, and power. Thus arrayed, he entered the crowded theatre, and seated himself upon a throne of state, desirous of attracting the general notice, admiration, and applause. He addressed the assembly in a speech probably prepared for the occasion, and they were not loth to pay him the deference he wished for.

* This is occasionally rather indifferent ground to found any assertion upon, as the book of Dorotheus is thus characterized by Miræus: "Sub nomine Dorothei Tyrii in Biblioth. vet. Patrum extat 'Synopsis de vita et morte Apostolorum, Prophetarum, ac Discipulorum, Christi,' quæ plena est fabulis; ut Molanus, Baronius, Bellarminus, et alii observarunt." (De Script. Illust., p. 5.) Rivet confirms this by several instances, and is surprised, consequently, that Bellarmine (de Pontif. Rom., lib. ii. cap. 4) should attempt, as he does, to support St. Peter's Roman episcopate from such a source. "Dorotheus Presbyter passus est sub Juliano circa 363." (Foxe, vol. i. p. 95, *n.*)

They gave a shout declarative of their high admiration; and, as if they were ready to exalt him above the rank of mortals by giving him divine honours, they cried out, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." (Acts xii. 22.) The King, too sensible of the people's praise, though convinced that such admiration was impious in the extreme, appeared to approve, rather than to reject, the blasphemous flattery, and tacitly consented to receive that homage which should be paid only to our Almighty Creator.* "He gave not God the glory." An exemplary punishment speedily followed. In the midst of all this splendour, while he was elated with the notion of his own superior excellence, as if he were a god, he felt a mortifying conviction, and exhibited a melancholy proof, of his helplessness and mortality. At that instant he was smitten with a dreadful disease, his knees smote together, much pain was in all his loins, and his face gathered blackness. (Nahum ii. 10.) Perceiving the attack to be mortal, he rejected the flattery of his sycophants, and told them, that he whom they called immortal was dying. He confessed his folly and wretchedness in the hearing of his idolatrous admirers; and, after a few days of extreme suffering, became a loathsome corpse. St. Luke, the sacred historian, though himself a Physician, ascribes it solely to the immediate vengeance of heaven. We ask not for any other explanation; and we lament that so many in the present day seem determined to ascribe every event to natural principles and second causes, and to be unwilling to acknowledge the first great Cause of all, or to allow the God of nature and of providence any influence in the government of his own universe. "And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost." (Acts xii. 23.) Dr. E. Burton supposes that James the Elder suffered about the year 44.

* See Joseph. Antiq., lib. xix., cap. 8, sect. 2; Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. ii., cap. 10.

BOOK III.

PERSECUTIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE AFTER THE DEATH OF JAMES THE ELDER, UNTIL THE CLOSE OF THE FIRST CENTURY.

CHAPTER I.

Hostility of the Jews to Christianity—Awful Punishments inflicted upon the former—Calamities brought upon the Church by the Gentiles—The Idea of TEN *Persecutions examined—Its Absurdity—It is built upon Error—Augustine quoted—Treacherous Testimony of Ecclesiastical Historians—Notion that all the Apostles suffered Martyrdom not sustained—Heracleon, Polycrates, and Tertullian referred to—The Origin of this Idea traced—Meaning of the Words "Martyr" and "Confessors"—Great Honours rendered to them—Cyprian quoted—Relics of Martyrs—Their supposed Value—Numerous flagrant Acts of Superstition with regard to them—Optatus quoted—Anecdote of Lucilla—Cæcilian—The Donatist Schism—Augustine on the Subject of Relics—Edict of Theodosius the Great—Martyrium, what?—Bingham quoted—Mabillon on the Abuse of Relics—Respect speedily degenerated into Adoration—Relics a Source of Wealth to the Church—And of Extortion and Knavery in the Clergy—Bellarmine appeals to Scripture in Support of Relics—The Labours of the Apostles—Uncertainty of all Documents respecting them, except those of the New Testament—Notices of Christianity in Rome.*

ALTHOUGH the persons professing Christianity at this early period of the history of the church, were conspicuous for the exemplary holiness of their doctrines, and the innocence of their lives, nevertheless the leading men and Priests of the Jewish nation not only heaped upon the Apostles and their followers the heaviest injuries and insults, but, as far as lay in their power, the infliction of death itself. This was exemplified in the martyrdom of Stephen, of James the son of Zebedee, and also of James the Just, Superintendent of the church at Jerusalem.* The true ground of this hostility, none can doubt to have been the gloomy apprehensions of the Jewish nation, that if Christianity prospered in the world, the system of Judaism could not be maintained. Not only in Palestine, but also in foreign states, the descendants of Abraham used the most strenuous efforts to crush the Christian sect; and displayed equal, if not greater, inhumanity than their brethren resident in Judea. We learn from the Acts of the Apostles, and from other credible writers, that they spared no pains to instigate the Magistrates and populace in the Roman provinces to harass and destroy the believers in Christ, in which unhallowed work they were encouraged by the Jews in Palestine, who frequently sent messengers, exhorting them, not only to shun the Christians, but to persevere with increased zeal in their sanguinary and cruel efforts,

* Acts vii. 55; xii. 1, 2. Joseph. Antiq., lib. xx., cap. 8. Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 2.

to accomplish their destruction.* They were constantly denouncing the Christians as a people hostile to the government of Rome, and Christ as a malefactor, most justly slain by Pilate, having been called by them King. "These all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another King, one Jesus." (Acts xvii. 7.) These diabolical prejudices were eagerly transmitted from father to son, from generation to generation: thus the followers of Christ had no enemies in the known world so rancorous and bitter as the Jews.†

The Most High ere long inflicted upon this relentless and perfidious nation awful and unheard of punishments, as a righteous, though tremendous, retribution, for the many crimes that had been committed against Jesus and his friends. He suffered Jerusalem, the capital of Palestine, together with the temple, to be razed to their foundation by the Roman Emperor Vespasian, and his son Titus, about forty years after the ascension of our Lord; an immense multitude of the people were miserably butchered, and most of the survivors sold into slavery.‡ In every subsequent age, the Jews have been a by-word, and reproach, and the subjects of popular malevolence and envy, on the face of the earth. Throughout the whole history of the human race, we meet with but few, if any, instances of slaughter and devastation equal to this. In contemplating it, amongst various other things which present themselves to our notice, as well as deserving of the most serious attention, it is particularly worthy of remark, that the Jews themselves, rather than the Romans, must be considered as the authors of that great and fearful accumulation of evils which signalized the final desolation of the house of Israel.

The Gentiles brought upon the church still greater calamities than the Jews, who wanted power. The persecutions of the Christians by the Romans, have for many ages been accounted *ten* in number. The history of the church does not support the idea.§ If we enumerate the more severe and extensive persecutions which took place during the early days, they do not amount to that number: if we include the provincial and more limited persecutions, the number will necessarily be much more than ten. Some Christians of the fifth century were induced to believe, from certain portions of Scripture, and especially from the Apocalyptic vision, that the church would experience ten calamities of some heavy kind; and to this vague and

* See Justin Martyr, Dial. cum Tryphone. Pp. 51—53, 109, 138, 318. Ed. (Jebb.)

† Passages from early Christian writers, who complain of the Jewish persecutions, are collected by J. A. Fabricius, Lux Evang., toti orbi exoriens, chap. vi., sect. i., p. 121. See also the Epist. of the Church of Smyrna, de Martyrio Polycarpi, sect. xii., xiii.

‡ See Josephus's History of the Jewish War. Basnage Histoire de Juifs, tom. i., cap. 17.

§ See Sulpitius Severus, Historia Sacra, lib. ii., cap. xl., p. 387. Ed. Horn., 1654. Augustinus De Civit. Dei, lib. xviii., cap. 52. In the fourth century the number of the persecutions had not been defined. Lactantius, De Mortibus Persecutorum, reckons only six. Eusebius, Hist. Eccles., does not state their number; yet we might make out nine from this writer. This is the number given by Sulpitius Severus, in the fifth century. But in his time originated the opinion of just *ten* persecutions; and Sulpitius, to make out that number, includes the persecution of Antichrist at the end of the world. See Mosheim, de Rebus Christ. ante Const. Mag. Dr. Hey considers that eleven persecutions may be made out from Eusebius. (Lectures in Divinity, vol. i., p. 201. Camb., 1841.)

indefinite interpretation they accommodated ecclesiastical history. The notion is confessedly very ancient, and is built upon popular error, without the least shadow of foundation. We have good authority for stating, that, in the fourth century, the number of Christian persecutions had not been correctly ascertained. The Christians of the fifth century who, from their interpretation of some passages of the inspired writings, had been led to anticipate the fulfilment of a definite number of evils, discovered that the persecutions recorded in history did not amount to that number; therefore they endeavoured, in order to uphold the authority of the sacred volume, to spread the idea, that the completion of the predicted number would not take place until the end of the world, when Antichrist should reign. Others who fully credited the hypothesis that ten persecutions were predicted in the Scripture, but did not imagine that the afflictions to be expected from Antichrist were to be included, strove, by distorting and perverting the history of the church previous to the time of Constantine the Great, to make it exhibit the whole of the troublous times which they conceived were thus prognosticated. For this we have the testimony of Augustine. He declares that he can by no means assent to the opinion, that only ten persecutions of the Christians are foretold in Scripture until the time of Antichrist, and that his shall be the eleventh and the final one.* In the next place, the Bishop of Hippo informs us, respecting the particular portion of divine truth on which this notion of ten persecutions, anterior to the time of Constantine, was established. The plagues of Egypt were in number ten, prior to the exodus, which they supposed prefigured the sufferings of the church; and the eleventh, or the persecution which the church has to suffer from Antichrist, they imagined to be indicated by the Egyptians pursuing the children of Israel into the Red Sea, where the former perished.† A more silly and absurd exposition of holy writ will with difficulty be found.

In treating of the martyrdom of the Apostles, we cannot but be aware that we tread on treacherous and uncertain ground, owing to the vague and contradictory statements which constantly assail us, while threading the labyrinths of ecclesiastical history. We meet with but little in which we can fully confide, except what is recorded in the books of the New Testament, and a few credible and authentic memorials of antiquity. In this case, as in others of doubt and uncertainty, difference of opinion will prevail with regard to what ought to be received, and what rejected. We might with propriety hesitate to withhold our assent to the testimony of Origen, Eusebius, Gregory Nazianzen, Jerome, Socrates, and others of more ancient date who are cited with approbation by Eusebius, and at the same time

* "Proinde ne illud quidem temere puto esse dicendum, sive credendum, quod nonnullis visum est, vel videtur, non amplius ecclesiam passuram persecutiones usque ad tempus Antichristi, quam quot jam passa est, id est, decem, ut undecima, dedemque novissima, sit ab Antichristo."—*August. de Civit. Dei*, lib. xviii., cap. 52.

† "Plagas enim Ægyptiorum quoniam decem fuerunt, antequam inde exire inciperet populus Dei, putant ad hunc intellectum esse referendas, ut novissima Antichristi persecutio similis videatur undecimæ plagæ, qua Ægyptii, dum hostiliter sequerentur Hebræos, in Mari Rubro, populo Dei per siccum transiente, perierunt."—*Ibid.*

receive with considerable caution and reserve the writings of authors of a later age, unless such were satisfactorily corroborated by genuine and indisputable documents. When mercenary scribes were unhappily taken into the service of Ecclesiastics who heeded not the truth, the word of God was corrupted with impunity; fiction was resorted to; and it was not long before the arrogance and presumption of men carried even forgery and imposition to an almost incredible extent, from which none, perhaps, suffered more than the disciples and Apostles of our Lord.

That each of the Apostles, with the exception of St. John, suffered capital punishment at the command of the civil Magistrate, is a report that appears to have been regularly handed down from an early day, and has been supported by many various writers. The evidence, however, on which they rest the proof of the fact, is by no means conclusive. That Peter and Paul and James suffered thus, is established on the faith of numerous and respectable authorities; but there are several considerations which prevent our believing that their colleagues in the apostolate met with a similar fate. Heracleon, an author who flourished during the second century, and quoted by Clement of Alexandria,* positively denies that Matthew, Philip, Thomas, Levi, and some others, were put to death. The Apostle Philip is left out of the category of martyrs by Polycrates, who states that he died and was buried at Hierapolis.† Tertullian, also, who was thoroughly conversant with every part of Christian history, true as well as feigned, enumerates no more than three of the Apostles as coming within the class of martyrs; namely, Peter, Paul, and James the Elder.‡ There is reason to believe, that the accounts of the martyrdom of several of the Apostles of our Lord were invented subsequently to the age of Constantine the Great. At this we are not surprised. The very great veneration and respect in which the martyrs were held in the early days of the church, will go far in accounting for the fact; and this veneration, during the tranquillity which the Emperor restored to the Christian commonwealth, attained a degree surpassing all belief. When the martyrs began to be worshipped almost like the deities of Heathenism, and to have certain honours rendered to them, which the Greeks and Romans paid to their demi-gods and heroes, it was easy to imagine that all the Apostles ought to be included in the catalogue of sufferers, lest they should appear in the estimation of the multitude, as deficient of the most distinguishing and infallible mark of sanctity and honour. This extravagant and unwarrantable proceeding may also be attributed to the ambiguity which, in those days, was attached to the

* Clem. Alex., Stromat, lib. iv., cap. 9.

† Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. v., cap. 24. Baronius, (Annales, tom i., ad. Ann., 35, sect. 141,) and others after him, would have us to understand Polycrates as speaking of that Philip who was one of the seven Deacons of the church at Jerusalem, and not of Philip the Apostle. But the advocates of this opinion stand confuted by Polycrates himself, who says expressly, that the Philip of whom he makes mention was one of the twelve Apostles. (Mosheim's Commentaries on the Affairs of the Christians, vol. i., p. 142. 8vo. Ed. London, 1813.

‡ Tertulliani Opera. Contra Gnosticos, cap. xv., tom. i., p. 265. 8vo. Wirceb., 1780.

term "martyr." In the Greek language it signifies any description of witness; but the meaning affixed to it by the Christians of former days implied a more eminent kind of witness, even such as testified, beyond all contradiction, that Christ was the centre of their affection and hope, by sealing the truth with their blood. The Apostles are denominated "witnesses" in the former sense, by Christ himself. (Acts i. 8.) The term has evidently no higher import annexed to it, when applied, as it afterwards is, by the Apostles themselves, in order to elucidate the nature of their functions. (Acts ii. 32.) It might, however, very easily occur, that unlearned persons, not aware of this distinction, might conceive that the word "martyr," which they discovered thus appended to the Apostles in the writings of the New Testament, was to be understood in the latter sense; consequently, they with haste adopted the opinion, that they ought to be placed in the same class with those whom the believers were accustomed to style, in the more eminent sense, martyrs.* Those who had never been called to give this last severe proof of their faith and sincerity, but had, nevertheless, at the peril of their lives, and at the hazard of honour, fortune, and every other worldly consideration, made open profession of their belief in Christ in the face of the heathen tribunals, were distinguished by the title of "confessors." The authority and respect which individuals of either class, whether martyrs or confessors, enjoyed during life, and the veneration in which their memory was afterwards held by contemporary Christians, were not to be credited.

Both martyrs and confessors were supposed to be "filled with the Spirit," (Eph. v. 18,) and to act under an immediate and divine inspiration. Whatever they said, was considered as proceeding from "the oracles of God;" and whatever during their imprisonment they desired, was regarded in the light of a sacred command, to disobey which was the height of recklessness and impiety. When they died, they imagined they were received immediately into heaven, and admitted to share in the celestial councils and administration; that they took their seats as co-judges with the Most High, with whom they possessed sufficient influence to obtain from him whatever they might make the subject of their supplications. Annual festivals were appointed in commemoration of their death,† their characters were

* Mosheim's Commentaries, vol. i., pp. 144, 145. 8vo. Edit. London, 1813.

† These festivals were grown so numerous in the time of Chrysostom and Theodoret, that they tell us it was not once, or twice, or five times in a year that they celebrated their memorials, but they oftentimes celebrated one or two in the same week, which occasioned frequent solemnities. (Chrysost., Hom. xl., in Juvent., tom. i., p. 546. Theodoret, Serm. viii., de Martyr., tom. iv., p. 605.) The church of Smyrna, of which Polycarp was the Bishop, in their Epistle to the church of Philomelium, recorded by Eusebius, (lib. iv., cap. xv.,) informs them, that "they intended, if God would permit, to meet at his tomb, and celebrate his birth-day, that is, the day of his martyrdom, with joy and gladness, as well for the memory of the sufferer, as for example to posterity." Cyprian orders his Clergy to note down the days of their decease, that a commemoration of them might be celebrated amongst the memories of the martyrs. ("Dies eorum quibus excedunt adnotate, ut commemorationes eorum inter memorias martyrum celebrare possimus."—*Cypriani Epist.*, xxxvi., p. 43. 8vo. Edit. Paris, 1836.) In another place, he says, "They offered sacrifices for them as often as they celebrated their passions, or days of martyrdom, by an anniversary commemoration."

made the theme of public eulogy, monuments were charged with transmitting their names and acts to posterity, and various other distinguished honours were paid to their memories. Those who had acquired the title of confessors were maintained at the public expense, and on every occasion were treated with the utmost respect. The affairs and interests of the different religious assemblies to which they severally belonged, were, in a considerable degree, consigned to their management and care. Advantage was taken of the influence which they possessed, to intercede with the Bishop on behalf of the lapsed. Anciently, the martyrs in prison were allowed this privilege, when any penitent had well-nigh performed his legal penance, and was soon to be restored to communion with the church, to write letters to the Diocesan, requesting that such an one might forthwith regain his fellowship, although his full term of penance was not expired. So far, the petition was generally accepted. Abuses, however, followed. Crafty and designing men, for the lucre of gain, prevailed upon the martyr to intercede for those who had done little or no penance; and even the martyrs themselves abused the privilege which the church, by common consent, had granted to them, by peremptorily demanding the admission to communion with the people, of such, without any previous examination of their merits: sometimes they required the Bishop not only to admit such a penitent, but all that belonged to him; which was a very uncertain and obscure sort of petition, and created great prejudice against the Bishop, when occasionally twenty or thirty nameless individuals were included in it. Cyprian complains most bitterly against these practices, "as dissolving the bands of faith, and the fear of God, and the commandments of the Lord, and the holiness and vigour of the Gospel."* "This occasioned," adds the Bishop, "great seditions and tumults; for in many cities throughout the province of Carthage, the people rose up in multitudes against their Bishops, and, by their clamours, compelled them to grant them instantly that peace which they all said the martyrs and confessors had given them: they who had neither courage, nor strength of faith, to resist them, were terrified and subdued into a compliance." Cyprian, also, had much to do to withstand the people at Carthage: "For some turbulent men, who were hardly governable before, and thought it too severe an infliction of punishment to be excluded from communion until the Bishop's return from exile; when they had obtained the letters of the martyrs, they were all so excited with the conviction of their great influence and power, that they began to rage immoderately, and in a tumultuous and menacing

("Sacrificia pro eis semper ut meministis, offerimus quoties martyrum passiones et dies anniversaria commemoratione celebramus."—*Ibid.*, *Epist.*, xxxiii.) These sacrifices were those of prayer and thanksgiving to God for the examples of the martyrs, and the celebration of the eucharist on these days, and the offerings of alms and oblations for the poor, which, together with a panegyrical oration or sermon, and reading the acts or passion of the martyr, if they had any such recorded, were the exercises and special acts of devotion, in which they spent these days. (Bingham's Christian Antiq., book xiii., chap. ix., sect. 5. 8vo. Edit. Vol. iv., pp. 364, 365. London. 1840.)

* "Qua pene omne vinculum fidei et timor Dei et mandatum Domini et Evangelii sanctitas et firmitas solveretur."—*Cyp. Epist.*, xxii. *Ad Clerum Romæ.*

manner demand the peace which they declared the martyrs had already granted." *

From the high opinion that was entertained of the exalted character of the martyrs, sprung up the notion that their relics possessed a divine virtue, efficacious in counteracting or remedying any ills to which either our souls or bodies may be exposed. This superstition increased to such a degree, as to induce the more ignorant and covetous of the clergy to procure, by fair or unfair means, these earthly remains, to rob graves, and steal the bones of martyrs or any others, that they might secure a sufficient stock of which they might make gain. This superstitious practice, so calculated to encourage venality and crime, religious imposition, or pious frauds, was early in operation in some portions of Christendom. For nearly five hundred years the church interfered not with the relics of the martyrs, but decently to inter them: afterwards they were used for antiscriptural and dangerous purposes. Optatus † says, that Lucilla, the rich foundress of the Donatist schism, was accustomed, before she received the eucharist, to kiss the mouth of a certain martyr, which, whether true or false, she had procured, and kept for that object. For this she was greatly reproved by Cæcilian, Archdeacon of Carthage, which she remembered and resented to such a degree, that when he succeeded to the bishopric, she, being a powerful, rich, and factious woman, caused others to be nominated. Hence the origin of the Donatist schism, which arose from the pride and superstition of a woman indomitably attached to the veneration of relics. Augustine ‡ informs us, that there were in his time a great number of wandering idle Monks, hypocritical men, who, by the instigation of Satan, went about the country selling relics of martyrs, which it was very doubtful whether they were the remains of true martyrs or not. To counteract and abolish this disgraceful practice, Theodosius the Great § enacted, "That no one should remove any dead body that was buried, from one place to another; that no one should sell or buy the relics of martyrs: but if any one was minded to build over the grave, where a martyr was buried, a church, to be called a *martyrium*, in respect of him, he should have liberty to do it." "This was," says Bingham, "the honour that was paid to martyrs; to let them lie quietly in their graves, and build churches over them, which were dedicated to God and his service, not to any religious worship of the martyr: only in honour to him the church might be called a

* Bingham's Christ. Antiq., book xvi., chap. iii., sect. 4. Vol. v., pp. 506, 508.

† Optati Opera, lib. i., p. 40. (P. 18. Fol. Edit. Paris. 1676.)

‡ The language of Augustine is strong: "Callidissimus hostis.....tum multos hypocritas sub habitu monachorum usquequaque dispersit, circumeuntes provincias, nusquam missos, nusquam fixos, nusquam stantes, nusquam sedentes. Alii membra martyrum, si tamen martyrum, venditant: alii fimbrias et phylacteria sua magnificant," &c.—*August. de Opere Monachor.*, cap. xxviii. *Opera*, tom. vi., p. 364. Edit. Benedict. 1700.

§ "Humatum corpus nemo ad alium locum transferat; nemo martyrem distrahat, nemo mercetur: habeant vero in potestate, si quolibet in loco sanctorum aliquis est conditus, pro ejus veneratione, quod *martyrium* vocandum sit addant quod voluerint fabricarum."—*Cod. Theod.*, lib. ix., tit. 7. *De Sepulchris Violatis*, leg. vii., tom. iii., p. 152. Lugd., 1665.

martyrium, after his name; but beyond this, no honour was to be given to him under any pretence of veneration; and to take up his body, and make merchandise of his bones, was so far from veneration, that it was reckoned a disturbing of his ashes, and a robbing of graves, which was mere covetousness, hypocritically covered under the name of religion. I question not," he proceeds, "but the law of Valentinian III., which speaks of Bishops, and others of the Clergy, who were concerned in robbing the graves, was levelled against this sort of men, who digged up the bones of martyrs, and sold them as holy relics, to gratify their own lucre at the expense of superstitious people, who thought it an honour to a martyr to keep his bones above ground; whereas all the laws of church and state then reckoned it a sacrilegious robbing of graves, and disturbance of those holy relics, which ought to have lain quiet and unmolested until the resurrection." *

The abuses of the church of Rome with regard to relics, are flagrant and notorious. Such was the rage for them at one time, that Mabillon, a Benedictine, justly complains, the altars were laden with suspected relics, numerous spurious ones being constantly, and every where, offered to the piety and devotion of the faithful. He declares that bones are often consecrated, which, so far from belonging to saints, probably do not belong to Christians. From the catacombs, numerous relics have been taken; and yet it is not known who were interred therein. In the eleventh century, relics were tried by fire, and those which did not consume were reckoned genuine, and the rest not. Relics were, and still are, preserved on the altars whereon mass is celebrated, a square hole being made in the middle of the altar, large enough to receive the hand; and herein is the precious morsel deposited, being first wrapped in red silk, and inclosed in a leaden box.† In process of time this outward respect degenerated into formal worship; innumerable processions, pilgrimages, and miracles, from which the Romish hierarchy has derived incredible advantage, followed. In the end of the ninth century, it was considered insufficient to reverence departed saints, to confide in their intercessions and succour, to clothe them with an imaginary power of healing diseases, working miracles, and delivering from all descrip-

* Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church, book xxiii., chap. iv., sect. 8. Vol. vii., p. 455. Straker's Edit., 1840. There is an instance, in the third century, of some well-meaning Christians, who, after the martyrs Fructuosus and Eulogius were burnt, gathered up their remains, and would have kept them by them, only out of respect and love, not for any religious worship; but Fructuosus, after his passion, appeared to them, and admonished them to restore immediately whatever part of the ashes any one out of love had taken to himself, and that, putting them all together, they should bury them in one common grave. The great care of the church, and of the martyrs themselves, in those days, was not to have their relics kept above ground for worship, but to be decently buried under the earth. And, therefore, when the heathen Judge asked Eulogius the Deacon, who suffered with Fructuosus, his Bishop, "Whether he would not worship Fructuosus, as a martyr, after death?" he plainly replied, "I do not worship Fructuosus, but Him only whom Fructuosus worships." (See Acta Fructuosi, apud Baronii Annales, Ann. 262. Antw., 1597. Dallæus de Objecto Cultus Relig., lib. iv. Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. iv., cap. 15. See also a valuable paragraph in August. Serm. ci., de Diversis, p. 1108. Fol. Edit. Benedict.)

† Mabillon (de Liturg. Gallicana, book i., chap. ix., sect. iv.) owns there were no relics set upon the altar, even to the tenth century.

tions of calamity and danger; their bones, their clothes, the apparel and furniture they possessed during life, the very ground they had touched, or in which their putrid carcases had been deposited, were treated with an ignorant veneration, and supposed to retain the marvellous virtue, of healing all disorders, both of body and mind, and of defending such as possessed them against all the assaults and devices of the devil. The consequence of all this was, that every one was eager to provide himself with these salutary remedies; great numbers undertook fatiguing and perilous voyages, and subjected themselves to all sorts of hardships; while others made use of this delusion to accumulate riches, and to impose upon the miserable multitude by the most impious and shocking inventions. As the demand for relics was prodigious and universal, the Clergy employed the utmost dexterity to satisfy all demands, and were far from being *conscientiously particular* in the methods which they adopted to secure their object. The bodies of the saints were sought by fasting and prayer, appointed by the Priest, in order to obtain a divine answer, and an infallible direction; and this pretended impulse never failed to accomplish their desires, and the holy carcase was invariably found. Each discovery of this kind was attended with excessive demonstrations of joy, while it animated the zeal of these devout seekers to enrich the church still more and more with this novel kind of treasure. Many travelled into the eastern provinces, and frequented the places which our Saviour and his disciples had honoured with their presence, that with the bones, and other sacred remains of the first heralds of the Gospel, they might comfort dejected minds, calm trembling consciences, save sinking states, and defend the inhabitants from calamity. Nor did these pious travellers return empty. The craft, dexterity, and knavery of the Greeks, found a rich prey in the stupid credulity of the Latin relic-hunters, and thus made a profitable trade of this new, though strange, kind of devotion. The latter paid considerable sums for legs and arms, skulls and jaw-bones, several of which were pagan, and others not human, which they supposed belonged to the primitive worthies of the Christian church. It was in this way the Latin church came to the possession of those celebrated relics of Mark, James, Bartholomew, Cyprian, Pantaleon, and others, which they show at this day with so much *éclat*. Many who were unable to procure these spiritual treasures by voyages and prayers, had recourse to violence and theft; for all kinds of methods, in a cause of this nature, were considered, when successful, as pious, meritorious, and acceptable to the supreme Being. Besides the argument from antiquity, to which the Papists refer, in vindication of their worship of relics, Bellarmine actually appeals to Scripture in its support.*

* Bellarmine refers to the following: Exod. xiii. 19; Deut. xxxiv. 6; 2 Kings xiii. 21; xxiii. 16—18; Isai. xi. 10; Matt. xi. 20—22; Acts v. 12, 15; xix. 11, 12. See Buck's Theological Dictionary, Henderson's edit. Relic Worship: an Address delivered in the Scotch Church, Madras, by the Rev. J. Roberts, (2d,) Wesleyan Magazine, vol. lxix., p. 998. And also some valuable papers by the Rev. E. C. Harrington, M. A., in the British Magazine, vol. xxv., pp. 511, 633; xxvi., p. 40. Relics were forbidden to be used or brought into England by several statutes, and Justices of

It has been generally supposed that the Apostles travelled throughout the greatest part of the then known and civilized world; and, either by themselves, or with the assistance of their disciples and co-adjutors, who accompanied them in their journeys, established Christian churches in many of the provinces. On this subject we refuse to have recourse to romantic legends or traditionary tales: the early history of many is lost in the mist which hangs over nearly every part of the primitive days of Christianity, not only preventing us from marking with precision the extent of the Apostles' progress, but also rendering it impossible for us, with any degree of confidence, to name any particular churches as founded by them, except such as are mentioned in the writings of the New Testament.* Throughout the world there is scarcely, not to say a nation or people, but even a city of any magnitude or consequence, in which the religion of Christ may be said to flourish, that does not ascribe the first planting of the church to one or other of the Apostles themselves, or to some of their immediate and most intimate disciples. The Spaniards boast of having had the light of the Gospel communicated to them by two of the Apostles in person; namely, St. Paul and St. James the Elder, as well as by many of the seventy disciples, and of those who were the companions of the Apostles.† The French, with equal ostentation and pertinacity, attribute the conversion of their forefathers to the preaching and labours of Crescens, the disciple and companion of St. Paul, of Dionysius of Athens, the Areopagite, of Lazarus, of Mary Magdalene, and others. Throughout Italy there is scarcely a city which does not pretend to have received the first rudiments of Christianity from either Paul or Peter, and that its first Bishop was appointed by one of them. The Germans affirm that Maternus, Valerian, and many others, were sent by the Apostles, and that the persons thus commissioned by Peter and his colleagues, established some considerable churches in that country. The inhabitants of Britain consider Paul, Simon Zelotes, Aristobulus, and particularly

the Peace were empowered to search houses for Popish books and relics, &c., which when found were to be defaced and burnt, &c. (3 *Jac.* i. cap. 26.)

* The history of the Christian community at Rome is most remarkable. It grew up in silence by some unknown teachers, probably of some of those who were present in Jerusalem at the first publication of Christianity by the Apostles. During the reign of Claudius it had made so much progress, as to excite open tumults and dissensions among the Jewish population at Rome: these animosities rose to such a height, that the attention of the Government was aroused, and both parties expelled. With some of these exiles, Aquila and Priscilla, St. Paul formed an intimate acquaintance during his first visit to Corinth; from them he received information of the extraordinary progress of the faith in Rome. The Jews seem quietly to have crept back to their old quarters when the rigour with which the imperial edict was at first executed had insensibly relaxed; and from these persons, on their return to the capital, and most likely from other Roman Christians, who may have taken refuge in Corinth, or in other cities where Paul had founded Christian communities, the first, or at least the more perfect, knowledge of the higher Christianity, taught by the Apostle of the Gentiles, would be conveyed to Rome. (See Milman's History of Christianity, vol. i., p. 452.)

† The views of Paul, on so remote a province as Spain at so early a period of his journey, appear to justify the notion, that there was a considerable Jewish population in that country. It is not impossible that many of the "Libertines" may have made their way from Sardinia. There is a curious tradition among the Spanish Jews, that they were residents in that country before the birth of our Saviour, and consequently had no concern in his death! (History of the Jews, vol. iii., p. 142.]

Joseph of Arimathea, as the founders of their church. That the former of these actually extended his travels to that island, and first preached the Gospel there, is a fact which has been strongly contested by many, who chiefly rely on the authority of a passage in the first epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians. The Russians, with the Poles and Prussians, venerate St. Andrew as the parent of their respective churches. All these, and many others, were considered as indisputable during those benighted ages, when every species of sound learning, divine as well as human, was overwhelmed and trodden under foot by ignorance and superstition. At present they are regarded in a very different light; and the wisest and best informed view them as fictitious, invented subsequently to the period of Charlemagne, by illiterate and designing men, who anticipated that by propagating a notion of the great antiquity of their several churches, they should open to themselves a source of profit and honour.*

CHAPTER II.

SECT. I. NERO—*His Character—The Conflagration of the City of Rome—The Public charge the Emperor with being the Incendiary—Nero accuses the Christians—Tacitus quoted—Name of Christian—Persecutions they endured—Cruelties perpetrated—Juvenal—Martial—Suetonius—State of Christianity in Rome—Christianity and Heathenism are, for the first time, brought into Collision—Polytheism—A persecuting Spirit may exist when there is no outward Persecution—Heathenism intolerant—Unacquainted with the Rights of Conscience—Cicero quoted—Cause of the Persecutions from the Heathens—Numerous Efforts to prejudice the People against the Christians—The Extent of Nero's Persecution—The celebrated Portuguese Inscription—Tertullian quoted.* SECT. II. MATTHEW AND MATTHIAS—*Birth and Parentage of* MATTHEW—*His Occupation—The Office of Publican noticed—Sabinius—Why the Office was in bad Repute—Zaccheus—The Detestation in which the Publicans were held—Call of Matthew—Bede—Travels of the Apostle—Socrates quoted—Eusebius—Simeon Metaphrastes—Legendary Tales of Nicephorus—Death of Matthew—Dorotheus—Heracleon—Power of Religion exemplified in Matthew—Porphyry and Julian—Matthew's Character.* MATTHIAS—*One of the Seventy—His Apostleship—Circumstances connected with this Event—Judas—His Character—And Death—Election of Matthias—Ancient Custom of Decision by Lot—The Manner of it—Scripture Instances referred to—His Labours—And supposed Martyrdom—Numerous legendary Accounts concerning him.* SECT. III. MARK, JAMES THE LESS, AND ANDREW—*The Conversion of* MARK—*Associate of Peter—His Qualifications—Writes the Gospel which bears his Name—His Travels—Bishop of Alexandria—Epiphanius—Eusebius—Jerome—His Martyrdom—And Fate of his Remains.* JAMES THE LESS—*His Parentage—Scanty Mention of him in the Scriptures—Jerome—Traditionary Anecdote—Bishop of Jerusalem—His Character—Eusebius—Hegesippus—Epiphanius—Clement of Alexandria—The Administration of Festus—His Death—Duplicity of the High Priest—His Schemes to destroy James—His Martyrdom.* ANDREW—*His relative Situation among the Apostles—Obtains the Title of "the First Called"—His Birth—Introduction to Jesus—Call of Andrew—He is raised to the Apostolate—His supposed Travels—Scythia of the Ancients noticed—Andrew suffers Persecution on Account of the Truth at Patræ—"Acts of his*

* Mosheim's Commentaries, vol. i., pp. 146, 147. 8vo. London, 1813.

Engraved by a Student

NERO.

Passion" too legendary to be credited—Ægeas, the Proconsul—Andrew sentenced to the Death of the Cross—Nicephorus—Maximilla—His Martyrdom—Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, quoted—Supposed Relic of the Cross of Andrew—Fabulous Stories concerning it—Natalis Alexander—Idle Accounts of his Remains related by Gregory Bishop of Tours, and Alban Butler.

SECT. I. PERSECUTIONS UNDER NERO.

In the year 54 Claudius was poisoned by his wife Agrippina, whose son, Nero, then succeeded to the empire. In the commencement of his reign the Christians were not persecuted; but this arose from the calumnies propagated against them not being generally known, and from no disposition on the part of the Emperor to protect. Although he was but a boy when he ascended the throne, he was full-blown in vice. Before he had bidden farewell to his *teens*, he was accustomed to go about the city at night committing the most disgraceful excesses; he showed great vulgarity, as well as licentiousness, in his amours; his conduct to his mother was most unnatural, and his relation Britannicus he caused to be poisoned. Such were the precursors of his future villany. It was in Rome where Christianity and Heathenism were first brought into collision, by the assault made by Nero upon the worshippers of the Most High. He was now exhibiting, without reserve or control, all the debased tendencies of his nature. A childish admiration of pageantry and shows, the vanity of being applauded as the best performer in every part, an abandonment to every form of licentious indulgence, and the Roman thirst for blood, formed the chief elements of his character. That his inconceivable fooleries and brutalities should have been so long endured, can only be accounted for by the degraded condition of the populace of Rome, whose tastes were similar to his own, and among whom he made himself a favourite, while they saw him seizing the overgrown wealth of the senators, and lavishing away the riches of provinces in gorgeous spectacles, and scenes of riot and debauchery. The people were at last made the victims of his madness. Ten out of the fourteen districts into which Rome was divided, were, within six days, almost entirely destroyed by fire, so swift was the progress of the conflagration. The vigilance of the government appears not to have neglected any of the precautions which might alleviate the sense of so dreadful a calamity. The imperial gardens were thrown open to the distressed multitude; temporary buildings were erected for their accommodation, and a plentiful supply of corn and provisions was distributed at a very moderate price, and every religious ceremony was observed to render the gods propitious. But neither the largesses to the people, nor the show of piety to the tutelar deities of the city, could screen Nero from the infamy of being considered as himself the author of all the evil. Every crime, it is true, might with fitness and propriety be imputed to the assassin of his wife and mother; nor could the Prince who prostituted his person and dignity on the theatre be deemed incapable of the most extravagant folly: it was therefore gravely asserted, and firmly believed, that Nero, enjoying the calamity which he had occasioned, amused himself with singing

to his lyre the destruction of ancient Troy. To divert a suspicion which the power of despotism was unable to suppress, the Emperor resolved to substitute, in his own place, some fictitious criminals.* We quote from Tacitus, where the name of "Christian" first occurs in his pages, and the reader will be astonished to find that the notorious Nero and the followers of Christ stand accused of the same crime. It is plain that the historian, though prejudiced against the Christians, did not in this instance believe them to be guilty; and their innocence of this atrocious act seems to have been generally allowed; but still the punishments which they suffered are not stated to have been unpopular; and their inhuman treatment might seem to have furnished amusement to the citizens of Rome. To "suppress the reports that were abroad, he turned the accusation against others, and inflicted the most exquisite tortures upon those people who were held in abhorrence for their crimes, and were commonly known by the name of 'Christians.' They derived this title from Christ, who, in the reign of Tiberius, had suffered death as a criminal under the Procurator, Pontius Pilate. This pernicious superstition, though checked for a while, broke out again, and spread, not only over Judea, the source of this evil, but reached this city also, whither flow, from all quarters, all things vile and shameful, and where they find shelter and encouragement. At first those only were apprehended who confessed themselves of that sect; afterwards a vast multitude was discovered by them, all of whom were condemned, not so much for the crime of burning the city, as for their enmity to mankind. Their executions were so contrived as to expose them to derision and contempt. Some were covered over with the skins of wild beasts, and torn to pieces by dogs. Some were nailed upon crosses; and others, having been daubed over with combustible materials, were set up as lights in the night-time, and then burned to death.† Nero employed his own garden as the theatre for this dreadful spectacle; where he also exhibited the diversions of the circus, sometimes standing in the crowd as a spectator, in the habit of a charioteer, at others, driving a chariot himself; till at length these men, though really criminal, and deserving exemplary punishment, began to be

* Gibbon's History of the Decline, &c., vol. ii., p. 405. Milman's edit.

† This last refinement of wanton cruelty was perpetrated by enclosing the miserable victim, kept upright by a stake under his chin, in a vest smeared with combustible substances, and setting fire to it. Juvenal is thought to glance at Nero's fiend-like play in the well-known lines (Sat. i. v. 155) :—

> "Pone Tigellinum : tæde lucebis in illa,
> Qua stantes ardent, qui fixo gutture fumant;"

which are thus translated by Gifford,—

> "But glance at Tigellinus, and you shine,
> Chain'd to a stake, in pitchy robes, and light,
> Lugubrious torch, the deepening shades of night."

In a note he adds, "The dreadful conflagration which laid waste great part of Rome in the reign of Nero, was found to have broken out in the house of Tigellinus. As his intimacy with the Emperor was no secret, it strengthened the general belief that the city was burned by design. Nothing seems to have enraged Nero so much as this discovery; and to avert the odium from his favourite, he basely taxed the Christians with setting fire to his house." (Rev. H. Soames, M. A.)

commiserated, as people who were destroyed, not out of regard to the public welfare, but only to gratify the cruelty of one man."*

"Such was the beginning," says Dr. David Welsh, "of the persecution from heathen rulers, to which Christianity was, during a lengthened period, to be subjected, being destined, like its divine Founder, to achieve its triumphs through a baptism of blood. The scene was in a great measure new in the history of the world. Different forms of worship had hitherto scarcely come into collision. Toleration was practically extended by the Romans towards almost every religion. Christianity itself had hitherto received little molestation from the Heathen. Its doctrines had been preached without hinderance in Rome itself; (Acts xxviii. 31;) they had even entered the palace of Cæsar, (Phil. iv. 22,) and were advancing in peaceful progress, when in a moment the volcano burst forth. This fearful collision between Christianity and Heathenism, which had thus its commencement, had been clearly foreseen by the great Author of our religion, who had indicated the true cause of the violent assaults that were to be made upon his followers, in the peculiar nature of his doctrine, which brought forth into malignant operation elements which for ages had lain in a great measure concealed in the heathen world.† The universal toleration of polytheism has afforded matter for panegyric with sceptical writers; ‡ and Christianity has been represented as chargeable, to a certain extent, with the cruelty of which it was so long the victim. But there can be no greater error than to suppose that there is no persecuting spirit where there is no outward persecution. It has often happened that the excess of intolerance has prevented the exhibition of conduct that might call forth the persecuting act. And from various causes, lengthened periods may elapse where nothing appears to provoke the bigotry which has never been asleep, though it may lurk under the guise of indifference or irreligion. The principles which prevailed among the idolatrous countries of antiquity respecting the worship that should be rendered by each state to its own gods as legally recognised, and which prevented the homage rendered to different deities from generating animosities, or kindling the flames of war between nations, were far from being connected with a tolerating spirit. The greatest philoso-

* Tacit. Annal., lib. xv., sect. xliv., tom. ii., p. 285. Grierson, edit. Dub. 1730. The persecution by Nero is alluded to by other heathen writers; Martial, lib. x., epigr. 25, and by Suetonius, in his Life of Nero, cap. xvi. It is supposed to have commenced in the middle of November, A.D. 64, and to have terminated at the death of the Emperor, who is well known to have been his own executioner, A.D. 68. For about four years, therefore, the Christians suffered every species of cruelty at his hands.

† Even the aged Simeon foretold that the victories of the Messiah were not to be won without a struggle that was to display the worst passions of our nature. In this, however, he referred chiefly to the opposition to be made by the Jews. (Luke ii. 34, 35.) But the cause of the opposition was the same with the Jews and the Gentiles; and it is foreshown with regard to both by our Saviour in such passages as the following, Matt. v. 10, 11; x. 34; Luke xii. 51—53; the essential principle being expressly laid down in John iii. 20.

‡ See Gibbon's Decline and Fall, chap. xvi. Hume gives the preference to polytheism over Theism, as more tolerating in its nature. Vol. ii., p. 436, *et seq.* See also Van Bynkershoek *De Cultu Religionis peregrinæ apud Veteres Romanos*, and Montesquieu on the Religious Policy of the Romans.

phers of heathen antiquity were altogether unacquainted with the rights of conscience; the laws of heathen nations were generally intolerant in the highest degree, requiring that the national rites should be observed, and that no new worship should be introduced without the sanction of the state;* and profane history presents many illustrations of the jealousy with which the people viewed any interference with their religious ceremonies. Accordingly, we find in Rome a scrupulous adherence, among all classes, to every figment of their ritual. On the part of the great proportion of the people, there was a superstitious belief in the efficacy of the services which were thus rendered. Even those who looked upon religion as merely an engine of state, believing all forms of worship to be in themselves equally indifferent, were zealous to maintain the existing form of superstition, from the influence it exerted on the public mind. And experience has shown that the most intolerant of all classes of individuals are those who, sceptical themselves, support religion on grounds of expediency, judging it reasonable that the restraint which they impose upon their own convictions should be exercised, in like manner, by others. In these circumstances it is obvious, that the boasted toleration of heathen antiquity arose merely from the absence of any attack upon the errors which prevailed, and that the religious peace would terminate with the first earnest attempt to introduce another system."

Hence we discover the fertile cause of the persecutions of Heathenism. "Such an attempt was, for the first time, systematically made by the followers of Jesus. They openly proclaimed that 'they were not gods which were made with hands;' they refused to participate in the established worship; they called upon all men everywhere to repent, and to turn from dumb idols to the service of the living God. By such proceedings, they at once rendered themselves obnoxious to the existing laws respecting religion; refusing to conform to the established worship, and endeavouring to introduce a new religion without the sanction of the state. For a time, however, they escaped

* Cicero *De Legibus*, cap. viii., sect. 8, gives us the following extract from the most ancient laws of Rome:—"Let no one have any separate worship, nor hold any new gods; neither to strange gods, unless they have been publicly adopted, let any private worship be offered: men should attend the temples erected by their ancestors." From Livy (book iv., cap. 30) we learn that, about four hundred and thirty years before Christ, orders were given to the Ædiles to see "that none except Roman gods were worshipped, nor in any other than the established forms." Somewhat more than two hundred years after this edict, to crush certain external rites which were becoming common in the city, it was decreed, "that whoever possesses books of oracle, or prayer, or any written act of sacrifice, deliver all such books and writings to the Prætor, before the Kalends of April; and that no one sacrifice on public or sacred ground after new or foreign rites." It may seem needless to produce separate instances, when, from the same historian, (book xxxix., cap. 16,) we learn that it had been customary, in all the early stages of the republic, to empower the Magistrates "to prevent all foreign worship; to expel its ministers from the forum, the circus, and the city; to search for and burn the religious books (*vaticinos libros*,) and to abolish every form of worship except the national and established form." That the same principle which had been consecrated by the practice of seven hundred years was not discontinued by the Emperors, is clearly attested by the historian, Dio Cassius. It appears that Mecænas, in the most earnest terms, exhorted Augustus "to hate and punish" all foreign religions, and to compel all men to conform to the national worship; and we are assured that the scheme of government thus proposed was pursued by Augustus, and adopted by his successors.

the notice of the Magistrates. Their numbers were too small to excite alarm, or they were considered merely as a sect of the Jews, who enjoyed the protection of the state in the exercise of their religious worship. But as their cause gained ground, suspicion and enmity, on the part of their heathen neighbours, began to be engendered. The pride of many took offence at the attack upon the ancient faith; the superstitious fears of others were awakened; many became alive to the dangers that threatened their personal interests, and sources of worldly gain; and the hatred of not a few was inflamed by the reproach which the virtues of their Christian neighbours brought upon their profligacy. In such circumstances, a ready credit was given to every calumny that could be circulated to the disadvantage of the Christians. Reports of this description were propagated, in the first instance, by the Jews, who endeavoured to stir up the minds of their brethren by sending emissaries for the very purpose of carrying an evil report of the Nazarenes, or to prejudice the Heathen against them, by representing them as men of a seditious and turbulent spirit, who taught doctrines dangerous to the security of civil government. St. Paul experienced the effects of this spirit almost from the commencement of his apostolic labours; (Acts xiv. 2;) the evil gradually increased, (Acts xvii. 1—13,) and when he came to Rome, he was informed by the Jews of that city, that the "sect was everywhere spoken against." (Acts xxviii. 22.) At a subsequent period, we learn, from the early Christian writers, that efforts were systematically made, by employing agents throughout all the provinces of the Roman empire to inflame men's minds against the new faith. As the numbers of the Christians increased, those who were interested in the support of the heathen superstitions began to take the alarm, (Acts xix. 24—41,) and endeavoured, by every means in their power, to lessen the credit of the Christians, and to render them obnoxious to the people and Magistrates. They represented them as guilty of detestable crimes, as dangerous members of society; and in times of public distress and danger, the evils endured were ascribed to the anger of the gods for the contempt manifested towards them by the new impiety.*

How far the persecution under Nero extended, is not agreed among the learned. For while the greater number suppose it to have spread over the whole Roman empire, there are not wanting others who confine it to the limits of the capital. The former opinion, which is the ancient one, appearing by far the better supported, we have no hesitation in agreeing with such as think that public laws were enacted against the whole body of Christians, and sent, moreover, into the provinces. To this opinion we are led, says Mosheim, among other reasons, by the authority of Tertullian, who clearly intimates that Nero and Domitian enacted laws against the Christians which Trajan so much mitigated as to render them inoperative. The noted Spanish or Portuguese inscription, in which Nero is com-

* Elements of Church History. Comprising the external History of the Church during the first three Centuries. By David Welsh, D.D., &c. Vol. i., p. 226, *et seq.* Edinburgh, 1844.

mended for having purged the provinces of the new superstition, being suspected by the Spaniards themselves, is rejected.* But who can suppose that a sect which the Emperor charged with so great an enormity was tolerated by him patiently out of Rome? The public might very naturally feel apprehensive that the Christians in the different provinces were actuated by similar views, and meditated the same attempts, as were imputed to those at Rome; and it was, therefore, no more than what the common safety appeared to demand, that the Emperor should direct his severity generally against the whole body of those who professed a religion so dangerous and pregnant with destruction. Tertullian, who wrote his Apology about the end of the second century, and before the Emperor Severus had enacted any new laws against the Christians, says, the Roman Magistrates were accustomed to reply to any who might speak in their defence, that nothing was left to the discretion of the Magistrates; for, however desirous they might be to spare that unfortunate people, it was impossible, since the laws were peremptory to the contrary. "But since," he remarks, "when the truth of our cause meeteth you at every turn, the authority of the laws is at last set up against it, so that it either is said, that nothing must be re-considered after the laws have decided, or the necessity of obedience is unwillingly preferred to truth; I will first contend with you about the laws, as with the guardians of the laws."† This feeble and futile pretence Tertullian attacks with great force, and exposes its weakness and fallacy by various arguments, of which the following is not the least forcible. Those laws to which you refer, said the orator, as not permitting Christians to exist, were enacted by Princes whose cruelty, impiety, and mad fury cannot but be regarded with detestation. "To treat somewhat of the origin of the kind of laws, there was an ancient decree, that no god should be consecrated by the Emperor, unless approved by the Senate. Witness Marcus Æmilius in the case of his own god, Alburnus. This also maketh for our cause, that with you duty is measured according to the judgment of man. A god, unless he please man, shall not be a god. Man will now be obliged to be propitious to a god. Tiberius, therefore, in whose time the name of Christ entered into the world, laid before the Senate, with his own vote to begin with, things announced to him from Palestine in Syria, which had there manifested the truth

* This "inscription" may be seen in J. Gruterus, *Inscriptionum* tom. i., p. 138, n. 9. It is this: "Neroni, ob provinciam latronibus et his qui novam generi humano superstitionem inculcabant, purgatam." But the best Spanish writers do not venture to defend the authority of this inscription; because it has not been seen by any one; and Cyriac of Ancona, who first produced it, is acknowledged by all to be unworthy of credit. I will subjoin the decision of that excellent and judicious historian of Spain, Jo. de Ferreras, *Histoire Général d'Espagne*, tom. i., p. 192. "I cannot refrain from remarking that Cyriac of Ancona was the first that published the inscription, and that from him all others had derived it. But as the credibility of this writer is suspected in the judgments of all the learned, and as not a vestige, nor any recollection, of this inscription remains, in the places where it is said to have been found, and no one knows now where to find it; every one may form such opinion of it as he pleases."

† "Sed quoniam cum ad omnia occurrit veritas nostra, postremo legum, obstruitur auctoritas adversus eam, ut aut nihil dicatur retractandum esse post leges, aut ingratis necessitas obsequii præferatur veritati: de legibus prius concurram vobiscum ut cum tutoribus legum."— *Tertull. Apol.*, cap. iv.

of the divinity of that Person. The Senate, because they had not themselves approved it, rejected it. Cæsar held by his sentence, threatening peril to the accusers of the Christians. Consult your annals: there you will find that Nero was the first to wreak the fury of the sword of the Cæsars upon this sect, now springing up, especially at Rome. But in such a first founder of our condemnation we glory. For whoever knoweth him, can understand that nothing save some great good was condemned by Nero. Domitian, too, who was somewhat of a Nero in cruelty, had tried it, but, forasmuch as he was also a human being, he speedily stopped the undertaking, even restoring those whom he had banished. Such have ever been our persecutors; unjust, impious, infamous, whom even yourselves have been wont to condemn, by whom, whosoever were condemned, ye have been wont to restore. But out of so many Princes, thenceforward, to him of the present day, who had any savour of religion and humanity, show us any destroyer of the Christians. But we on the other hand have one to show who protected them, if the letters of that most august Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, be inquired of, wherein he testifieth of that drought in Germany removed by the shower obtained by the prayers of the Christians who chanced to serve in his army. As he did not openly take off the penalty from the men of that sect, so, in another way, he openly made away with it by adding a sentence, and that a more horrid one, against the accusers also. What sort of laws, then, be those which only the impious, the unjust, the infamous, the cruel, the foolish, the insane, execute against us? which Trajan, in part, foiled by forbidding that the Christians should be inquired after; which no Adrian, though a clear searcher into all things curious, no Vespasian, though a vanquisher of the Jews, no Pius, no Verus, hath pressed against us? Surely the worst of men, it might be thought, ought to be more readily rooted out by the best, as being their antagonists, than by their own fellows."* Now, if this statement of Tertullian be deserving of credit, (and there is certainly no reason whatever to suspect its accuracy,) there can be no doubt that Nero, as well as Domitian, promulgated edicts against the Christians; and if such edicts were enforced, not a question can remain of their having been carried into effect throughout all the provinces.†

SECT. II. MATTHEW AND MATTHIAS.

MATTHEW, called also Levi, was, though a Roman officer, a Hebrew of the Hebrews: both his names declare that he was of Jewish extraction and origin. He was born at Nazareth, a city in the tribe of Zebulun, famous in history as having been the habitation of Joseph and Mary, and the place where our Saviour was brought up. Matthew was the son of Alphæus and Mary, sister or kinswoman to Mary the mother of our Lord. His occupation, or manner of life, was that of a publican,‡ or toll-gatherer, to the Romans,

* Tertull. Apologet., cap. v.

† Mosheim's Commentaries, vol. i., p. 191.

‡ This office was usually held by Roman Knights, an order instituted as early as the time of Romulus, and composed of men of great consideration with the Government,

which probably had been the calling of his father, his name denoting a broker, or money-changer, an office of bad report among the Jews. The profession of publican among the Romans, was one of power and credit, and even of considerable reputation: it was not ordinarily conferred upon any but Roman Knights. T. H. Sabinius, father of the Emperor Vespasian, was the publican of the Asiatic provinces, an office which he discharged so much to the satisfaction of the people, that they erected statues to him, with the following inscription: "To him that has well managed the publican's office." These persons, being sent into the provinces to gather the tribute, were accustomed to employ natives under them, as best skilled in the affairs and customs of their own country. Two circumstances transpired which rendered the office odious to the Jews. The men that usually transacted the business were great exactors; for, having themselves farmed the customs of the Romans, various methods of extortion were used to raise the rent which they had to pay, and also to secure some advantage to themselves. An instance we have in point, in the case of Zaccheus, one of the chief of these farmers, who, after his conversion, offered fourfold restitution to any man from whom he had fraudulently taken anything. On this account they became infamous even to the Gentiles, who, without hesitation, spoke of them as robbers and thieves, and as more voracious and destructive than wild beasts in the forest; and, secondly, the government tax was not only grievous to the Jews with regard to the expense which this impost created, but an insult to the liberty and freedom of the country: they considered themselves a free-born nation, and that they had been invested with this privilege by God himself, and consequently they beheld this constantly-recurring instance of their bondage as not to be endured; hence, therefore, their numerous unsuccessful rebellions against the Roman power. Add to these, also, that the publicans were not only obliged to have frequent dealing and association with the Gentiles, but, being Jews, they rigorously exacted these dues from their brethren, and thus appeared to conspire with the Romans in entailing perpetual slavery upon the Israel of God.

The name and profession of a publican, therefore, were extremely odious among the Jews, who submitted with such reluctance to the taxes levied by their conquerors. The Galilæans, or Herodians, the disciples of Judas the Gaulonite, were the most turbulent and rebel-

the principal men of dignity in their several countries, who occupied a kind of middle rank between the Senators and the people. (Jos. Antiq., lib. xii., cap. 4.) Although these officers were, according to Cicero, the ornament of the city, and the strength of the commonwealth, they did not attain to high situations, nor enter the Senate, so long as they continued in the offices of Knights. They were thus more capable of devoting their attention to the collection of the public revenue. The publicans were distributed into three classes; the farmers of the revenue, their partners, and their securities, corresponding to the Mancipes, Socii, and Prædes. They were all under the Quæstores Ærarii, who presided over the finances at Rome. Strictly speaking, there were only two sorts of publicans, the Mancipes and the Socii. The former, who were generally of the equestrian order, and much superior to the latter in rank and character, are mentioned by Cicero with great honour and respect; (Orat. pro Plancio. 9;) but the common publicans, the collectors or receivers of the tribute, as many of the Socii were, were covered, both by Heathens and Jews, with opprobrium and contempt. (Kitto.)

lious. (Acts v. 37.) They thought it unlawful to pay tribute, and founded their refusal to do so on their being the people of the Lord, because a true Israelite was not permitted to acknowledge any other Sovereign than God. The publicans were hated as the instruments by which the subjection of the Jews to the Roman Emperor was perpetuated, and the payment of tribute was regarded as a virtual acknowledgment of his sovereignty. According to the Rabbins, it was a maxim that a religious man who became a publican was to be driven out of society. They would not receive their presents at the temple any more than the price of prostitution, of blood, or of any thing wicked or offensive. "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." (Matt. xviii. 17.) Many publicans were in Judea during the time of our Saviour. Zaccheus doubtless was one of the principal, inasmuch as he is called "chief among the publicans;" (Luke xix. 2;) a phrase supposed to be equivalent to our "commissioner of the customs." Matthew appears to have been an inferior publican, and is described as "sitting at the receipt of custom." * (Luke v. 27.) Jesus was reproached by the Jews as the friend of publicans and sinners, and for eating with them; (Luke vii. 34;) but such was his opinion of the unbelieving and self-righteous Chief Priests and Elders who brought these accusations, that he replied unto them, "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." (Matt. xxi. 31.) The parable of the Pharisee and the publican, who went up into the temple to pray, (Luke xviii. 10,) is a beautiful illustration of the distinction between hypocrisy and true piety. When Jesus visited the house of Zaccheus, who appears to have been eminently honest and upright, he was assured by him that he was ready to give one half of his goods to the poor; and if he had taken anything from any man by false accusation, to "restore him four-fold." (Luke xix. 8.) This was in reference to the Roman law, which required that, when any farmer was convicted of extortion, he should return four times the value of what he had fraudulently obtained. There is no reason to suppose that either Zaccheus or Matthew had been guilty of unjust practices, or that there was any exception to their characters beyond that of being engaged in an odious employment.† Matthew either held his appointment at the port of Capernaum, or he collected the customs on the high road to Damascus, which went through what is now called Khan Minyeh, which place, as Robinson has shown, is the ancient Capernaum.‡ However, from this class of men, our Lord chose an Apostle.

Jesus, having lately cured a paralytic, afterwards walked out of Capernaum on the banks of the lake of Gennesaret, and saw Matthew at the receipt of custom, whom he called to follow him. The Evangelist is represented as being a wise and prudent man,

* The τελωνιον, or "custom-house," or "collectors' booth;" for such buildings were erected at the foot of bridges, the mouth of rivers, in towns, and at the landing-places along the sea-shore, where the publicans received the imposts on passengers and goods.

† Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature, by John Kitto, D.D., *in loco*.

‡ Robinson's Researches in Palestine, vol. iii., pp. 288—295.

and understood well what his new vocation implied; but he overlooked all the considerations of ease and wealth, and forsook every worldly interest to become our Lord's disciple. Being an inhabitant of Capernaum, he had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with our Saviour's person and doctrine. Christ had resided in that city for some time, where he had also preached and worked miracles, so that Matthew was in some degree, at least, prepared to receive the impression which the call of Christ had made. The great secret of his conversion is well and properly disclosed by the venerable Bede, who remarks, that "He who called him outwardly by his word, at the same time moved him inwardly by his grace;" and to show that he was not dissatisfied with the change, he entertained our Lord and his disciples in his house, whither he invited his friends, especially those of his own profession, hoping that they might be induced by our Lord's conversation to join his society. The carping and cynical Pharisees, whose eyes were constantly evil, suggested that it was unfitting and improper for Christ thus familiarly to associate with the worst of men, such as publicans and sinners, who were infamous even to a proverb. Our Saviour promptly replied, that they were the sick that needed the Physician, and not the healthy and robust; that his company was most suitable where the necessity of the soul did most require it; that the Most High himself preferred acts of mercy and charity, especially those which referred to the recovery of the lost sinner, infinitely before all ritual observances, and the rules of etiquette between man and man; and that the main design of his coming into the world was, not to bring the righteous, or those who proudly imagined themselves to be so, and, with erroneous views of their own adherence to the letter of the law, "despised others," but sinners, modest, humble, self-convinced offenders, to repentance. The vocation of Matthew took place during the second year of the active ministry of our Lord, who, soon after forming the company of his Apostles, adopted Matthew into that holy sodality.

But little further is recorded of this Apostle, during our Lord's continuance upon earth, though he was doubtless subservient to his will, and equalled the rest of his brethren in holiness and true piety, with whom we find him assembled to praise God, immediately after the ascension, and that he continued at Jerusalem, until the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. When the period arrived that the command of the Saviour, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations," (Matt. xxviii. 19,) was to be carried into execution, it is unknown, and destitute of any degree of certainty, whither, ultimately, he went. For the first eight years, subsequent to that memorable event, he appears to have preached up and down Judea: afterwards but little dependence is to be placed in the accounts recorded of the travels which Matthew undertook for the advancement of the Christian faith; so irrecoverably is truth lost in a crowd of legendary stories. Ethiopia has generally been assigned as the province of his apostolical ministry. Socrates says,* "Matthew was

* Socrates, Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 19; Rufinus, lib. x., cap. 9.

allotted Ethiopia;" it is only from writers of the fourth and fifth centuries that this account is taken, and then it is doubtful whether they intended the country of that name in Africa or Asia. Eusebius * had heard of his travelling beyond Judea; but he does not name any particular country, and mentions that it was just before his setting out on this journey, that he undertook to write his Gospel for the benefit of his countrymen. Simeon Metaphrastes, as contained in Surius, De Probatis Sanctorum,† mentions that he first went to Parthia, and having successfully planted the Gospel in those parts, he travelled from thence into Ethiopia. Here by preaching and miracles he greatly triumphed over error and idolatry; convinced and converted multitudes; ordained spiritual guides and Pastors to confirm and build them up in the faith, and then finished his own course. As for what is related by Nicephorus, of Matthew going into the country of the cannibals, constituting Plato, one of his followers, Bishop of Myrmena; of Christ appearing to him in the form of a beautiful youth, and giving him a wand, which he pitching into the ground, immediately grew up into a tree; of his strange conversion of the Prince of that country, of his numerous miracles, &c., they are justly to be reckoned among those fabulous reports that have no ground either of truth or probability to support them.‡

With regard to the circumstances attending the death of Matthew, the accounts are varied and contradictory. By many it is supposed that he suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia; but by what kind of death is altogether uncertain. Dorotheus, in his Synopsis, represents him as being honourably buried at Hierapolis, one of the first places in which he preached the Gospel. The common opinion is, that in the city of Nadabar, in Ethiopia, where he had lived a life of great austerity and abstinence, and had signalized his zeal in propagating the Gospel, he was slain with a halbert. The date of his death cannot be satisfactorily obtained. His festival in the Latin Church is observed on the 21st day of September. Lardner, however, is adverse to this statement. He informs us, that "Heracleon, a learned Valentinian, in the second century, as cited by Clement of Alexandria, reckons Matthew among those Apostles who did not die by martyrdom; nor does Clement contradict him. It is also observable, that Chrysostom has a commendation of Matthew, consisting of divers articles; his humility, mercifulness or liberality, piety, general benevolence, writing a Gospel; finally, fortitude, inasmuch as 'he came from the presence of the Council rejoicing;' referring, I suppose, to Acts v. 41; but he says nothing of his martyrdom: which may induce us to think, that there was not any tradition about it among Christians at that time; or, that it was not much regarded."§

We cannot conclude this statement, without observing that Matthew presents us with a great instance of the power of religion. If we reflect upon his circumstances while a stranger to Christ, the

* Eusebius, Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 24.
† Surius De Probatis Sanctorum, &c., Sept. 21, tom. v., p. 321. Fol. Colon., 1574.
‡ Cave's Lives of the Apostles, *in loco*.
§ Lardner's Works, vol. v., pp. 297, 298. 8vo. edit. London, 1831.

world to him presented great advantages. He was the proprietor of a plentiful estate, he was engaged in a rich and lucrative profession, and supported by the power and favour of the Romans; and yet, notwithstanding all these, no sooner did Christ call than all were renounced. Had our Saviour been a mighty Prince, it had been no wonder that he should run over to his service; but when he appeared under all the circumstances of meanness and disgrace, when he seemed to promise his followers nothing but misery and suffering in this life, and to propound no other rewards but the invisible encouragements of another world, his change in this case was the more strange and admirable. "Indeed, so admirable," says Cave, "that Porphyry * and Julian, two subtle and acute adversaries of the Christian religion, hence took occasion to charge him with falsehood or folly; either that he (Matthew) gave not a true account of the thing, or that it was very weakly done of him, so hastily to follow any one that called him. But the holy Jesus was no common person: in all his commands there was somewhat more than ordinary. Indeed, Jerome conceives that, besides the divinity that manifested itself in his miracles, there was a divine brightness, and a kind of majesty, in our Saviour's looks, that at first sight was attractive enough to draw persons after him. However, his miraculous powers, that reflected a lustre from every quarter, and the efficacy of his doctrine, accompanied by the Spirit and grace of God, prepared the way for the summons which was sent to Matthew, and enabled him to

* "About a hundred years after Celsus, flourished Porphyry," (whom Socrates speaks of as having been a Christian, Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 23, but apparently without grounds,) "the bitterest, and perhaps the most formidable, of all the early enemies of Christianity. The same remarks, however, may be extended to his works as are justly applied to those of Celsus; namely, that they only contain speculative reasonings, and bitter raillery, instead of an examination of the facts which support the Gospel, or an attempt to invalidate their evidence. Porphyry was a Syrian by birth: his name was Melek, which Longinus changed. He was a man of great learning and eloquence. Neander finely characterizes him as having recast an oriental spirit in a Grecian mould. Among his voluminous works, there were fifteen books against the Christians, of which nothing now remain but fragments. Answers were written to this work soon after it appeared, by Eusebius of Cæsarea, Methodius, and, at a later period, by Apollonarius. But these replies have also perished. Modern infidels have complained that the Christians suppressed what they could not answer, and an edict of Constantine, commanding the books of Porphyry to be burnt, has been represented as illustrative of the means which the Christians were ready to employ in support of their cause. Such an edict is inserted in the Histories of Socrates and Sozomen; but there is not wanting reason to suppose that they were imposed upon by a forgery: the heathen enemies of Constantine, Julian, Zosimus, and others, have not charged him with this instance of false zeal, and there is no allusion to the subject in any contemporary Christian writer. But though there had been such an edict, we cannot ascribe to it the loss of the books by Porphyry, copies of which were in existence after the time of Constantine. The truth seems to be, that Porphyry's attack upon Christianity, and the answers to it, fell gradually into oblivion. From the fragments which still remain of the works of this writer, it appears that he argued against the truth of the Gospel history, from the contradictions which it seemed to involve, and from the improbable nature of much that is recorded; that he endeavoured to show that our Saviour was often actuated by weakness and caprice; and that, from the differences between Peter and Paul, he sought to show that they could not be men commissioned to teach a revelation from heaven; he also brought forward many objections against the Old-Testament Scriptures, and he devoted a whole book to show that from the plainness of many of the prophecies of Daniel, as to the Kings of Syria and Egypt, they were written after the events." (Welsh's Elements of Church History, vol. i., pp. 333—335.)

overcome all the opposition that stood in the way."* We conclude, therefore, that the conduct of Matthew was highly exemplary. It was *prompt:* it admitted of no delay: to hesitate for one moment between Christ, and sin or the world, is to resist the divine call, and to forfeit the proffered grace. It was *courageous:* it surmounted all the opposition which an evil heart, and the allurements of time, could throw in the way. It was *constant* and *lasting:* Matthew did not go back, he did not even look back, but followed his Master with increasing fervour and devotion, and persevered to the end.

MATTHIAS was not an Apostle of the first election made by our Lord: consequently a particular and succinct account of him is not to be expected on the sacred page. He appears to have been one of Christ's disciples; and Clement of Alexandria supposes him, also, to have been one of the seventy whom our Saviour "sent into every city and place whither he himself would come." Be that as it may, he had attended upon our Lord during the whole course of his ministry on earth; (Acts i. 21, 22;) and, after his death, was elected into the apostleship. The circumstances attending this event were as follow:—Judas, who was called Iscariot, was one of the twelve called by the Lord to be one of his intimate disciples, and empowered with the rest to preach and to work miracles. "He was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry." (Acts i. 17.) Judas, notwithstanding, was vile and corrupt: he preached Christ, doubtless, with zeal and fervour, and perhaps with as much success, as the rest of the Apostles; yet he was a bad man, governed by sordid and mean principles, and easily sacrificed all the interests of religion and propriety, to covetousness and the love of gain. His avaricious temper led him to a most fatal end. Neither the honour of the position he held, the admitting him into an open and free fellowship with the Saviour, nor taking him to be one of his peculiar domestics and attendants, could divert Judas from his fell and sanguinary purpose of betraying his Master into the hands of those who he was aware would treat him with cruelty and insult. He knew how desirous the Chief Priests and Elders of the Jewish nation were to obtain possession of the Redeemer, especially at the time of the passover, that he might suffer in greater notoriety and disgrace. Judas engages for a paltry sum to betray the Lamb of God into the fangs of those wolves and lions: in a word, he heads the party, conducts the officers, and sees him delivered into their hands.†

How troublesome and uneasy is guilt! It is the death of all peace and serenity of mind, and fills the soul with storm and tempest. The Almighty has placed in the heart of man a powerful and invisible executioner. Whoever rebels against God, and despises the dictates of conscience, bids farewell to tranquillity and repose, and lays himself open to the resentment of a tormenting mind. By secret arts of wickedness the culprit may be able, for a time, to drown and stifle the voice of conscience; but every affliction or petty accident will be

* Cave's Lives of the Apostles, p. 390. 8vo. edit. Oxford, 1840.
† Ibid., p. 434.

apt to awaken it into horror, and to cause him to realize terror coming upon him like an armed man. Human wrath may be endured; but the irruptions of conscience are irresistible. A sad instance of this we have in Judas. Overwhelmed with vain regrets, he took the now hateful, though desired, price of his villany, and, seeking the presence of his purchasers, held out to them the money, with the useless confession of the guilt, which was too accordant with their schemes and hopes, for them to think of redeeming him from its consequences. The words of his confession were, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood." This last protestation was received by the proud Priests with as much regard as might have been expected from exulting tyranny, when in the enjoyment of the grand object of its efforts. With a cold sneer, they replied, "What is that to us? See thou to that!" Maddened with the immovable and remorseless determination of the haughty condemners of the Just One, he flung down the price of his ignominy and woe upon the floor of the temple, and rushed out of their presence, to seal his crimes and misery by the act that put him for ever beyond the power of redemption. Seeking a place removed from the observation of men, he hurried out of the city, and, contriving the fatal means of death for himself before the bloody doom of him whom he betrayed had been fulfilled, the wretched man saved his eyes the renewed horrors of the sight of the crucifixion, by closing them in the sleep which earthly sights cannot disturb. But even in the mode of his death, new circumstances of horror occurred. Swinging himself into the air,* by falling from a height, as the cord tightened around his neck, checking his descent; the weight of his body produced the rupture of the abdomen, and his bowels bursting through, made him, as he swung, stiffening and convulsed in the agonies of this doubly hideous death, a disgusting and appalling spectacle, a monument of the vengeance of God on the traitor, and a shocking witness of his own remorse and condemnation.†

A vacancy thus occurred in the apostolic company. The first object of the disciples, therefore, on their return from Mount Olivet, where our Lord took his departure from them, was to fill up the *hiatus* with a proper person. Peter acquainted them that Judas, according to the prophetic prediction, had fallen from the apostolate, and that it was necessary that another should be substituted; one that had been a companion and disciple of the holy Jesus, and consequently able to testify respecting his life, death, and resurrection. (Acts i. 21, 22.) Two were nominated in order to the choice, Joseph,‡ called Barsabas, and Matthias, both equally qualified and

* A very striking difference is noticed between the account given by Matthew of the death of Judas, and that given by Luke in the speech of Peter, Acts i. 18, 19. The various modes of reconciling these difficulties are found in the ordinary commentaries. With respect to a single expression in Acts i. 18, there is an ingenious conjecture offered by Mr. Granville Penn, in a very interesting and learned article in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature, which may be properly referred to here, on account of its originality and plausibility. Vol. I., part ii., pp. 51, 52.

† Lives of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. By D. Francis Bacon. 8vo. Pp. 460, 461. New-York, 1846.

‡ Joseph bore the honourable sirname Justus, which was most likely given him on account of his well-known probity. He was one of those who had companied with

eligible for this situation. The mode of election was by lot, a way frequently used among the Jews and Gentiles, for the decision of doubtful and difficult cases, and especially choosing Judges and Magistrates; and this plan was adopted in the present instance in compliance with an old custom, that in the election of an Apostle they might not seem to depart from the practice that had been followed in the political affairs of the country. Some writers have ventured to assert, that the lot was *not* used in this case, but that some immediate and extraordinary sign from heaven fell upon the candidate, and discovered him to be the individual chosen by the Great Head of the church. But this is directly contrary to the words of inspiration, which declare, "they gave forth their lots;* and the lot fell upon Matthias." (Acts i. 26.) This course the Apostles rather followed, because the Holy Ghost was not yet given, by whose immediate dictates and inspirations they were afterwards chiefly guided. That the important affair might proceed with greater regularity and success, in the first place they solemnly offered supplication unto heaven, that the omniscient Being that governed the universe, and perfectly understood the tempers and dispositions of mankind, would guide and direct the choice, and show which of the two he would appoint to fill the vacant office. The lots were put into the urn, the name of Matthias was drawn, and the apostolate fell upon him.

Shortly after, the promised powers of the Holy Spirit were conferred upon the Apostles, to prepare and qualify them for the arduous employment which lay before them. Among the rest, Matthias addressed himself to his work and charge. The New Testament is altogether silent with respect to his subsequent career; for not a fact is recorded concerning him. Nevertheless, the productive imagina-

the Apostles all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out amongst them, beginning from the baptism of John until the ascension. Tradition also accounted him one of the seventy. (Euseb. Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 12.) The same historian relates, (lib. iii., cap. xxxix.,) on the authority of Papias, that Joseph the Just "drank deadly poison, and, by the grace of God, sustained no harm." It has been maintained that he is the same as Joses, surnamed Barnabas, mentioned in Acts iv. 36; but the manner in which the latter is characterized, seems to point to a different person. (Heinrichs, on Acts i. 23. Ullmann in the Theolog. Stud., und Kritik., i. 377.) Kitto.

* Alfred Barnes says, "that some have supposed that this means, they *voted;* but to this interpretation there are insuperable objections. 1. The word 'lots,' κλῆρους, is not used to express votes or suffrage. 2. The expression, 'the lot fell upon,' is not consistent with the notion of voting. It is commonly expressive of casting lots. 3. Casting lots was common among the Jews on important and difficult occasions; and it was natural that the Apostles should resort to it in this. Thus David divided the Priests by lot. (1 Chron. xxiv. 5.) The land of Canaan was divided by lot. (Num. xxvi. 55; Joshua xv., xvi., xvii., &c.) Jonathan, son of Saul, was detected of having violated his father's command, and bringing calamity on the Israelites, by lot. (1 Sam. xiv. 41, 42.) Achan was detected by lot. (Joshua vii. 16, 18.) In these cases, the use of the lot was regarded as a solemn appeal to God, for his direct interference in cases which they could not themselves decide. Prov. xvi. 33: 'The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.' The choice of an Apostle was an event of the same kind, and was regarded as a solemn appeal to God for his direction and guidance in a case which the Apostles could not determine. The manner in which this was done is not certainly known. The common mode of casting lots was, to write the names of the persons on pieces of stone, wood, &c., and put them in one urn; and the name of the office, portion, &c., on others. They were afterwards placed in an urn with other pieces of stone, &c., which were blank; and then were drawn at random, together with the other pieces, and this determined the case."

of God in that place. No further circumstances are recorded of Mark in the New Testament; but it is believed, upon the authority of ancient writers, that, soon after his journey with Barnabas, he went with Peter into Asia, and that he continued with him for some time: perhaps till Peter suffered martyrdom at Rome.

Epiphanius, Eusebius, and Jerome assert that Mark preached the Gospel in Egypt; the two latter call him Bishop of Alexandria. He did not, however, confine his preaching to that city, or to the oriental parts of Egypt, but removed westward to Libya and the country contiguous, where, though the people were both barbarous in their manners and idolatrous in their worship, yet, by his preaching and his miraculous deeds, he made way for the reception of the Gospel; and left them not, says Cave, until he had not only gained them to, but confirmed them in, the profession of it. Returning to Alexandria, he preached often, and regulated the affairs of the church, providing suitable Governors and Pastors. But the enemy of souls would not suffer him long to be at rest: it was the time of Easter, when the great solemnities of the god Serapis were to be celebrated. The minds of the people being excited to a passionate vindication of the honour of their deity, they were led to break in upon Mark, then engaged in conducting the service of the Most High, and binding his feet with cords, dragged him through the streets of the city, and the most craggy places, to the Bucelus, a precipice near the sea, and for that night thrust him into prison, where his soul was by a divine vision encouraged, amid the ruins of his shattered body. Early the next morning, the tragedy began again, dragging him about in the same manner, till, from pain and the loss of blood, he expired. Their bigotry and malice did not die with Mark: Simeon Metaphrastes adds, that they burnt his body, and that the Christians decently buried his ashes near to the spot where he was accustomed to hold forth the words of life.* His mortal remains were afterwards, as the account is related, removed with great pomp from Alexandria to Venice, where Mark is adopted as the tutelar saint and guardian of the state, and where one of the richest and most stately churches has been erected to his memory. He is said to have suffered on the 25th day of April, which period both the Eastern and Western churches have devoted to his memory.†

* Sim. Metaphrast. Martyr. S. Marc. Apud Sur. ad diem. Apr. 25. Tom. ii. Colon., 1574.

† A dense mist of error rests upon all the uninspired records concerning Mark. Many of the statements of Eusebius, respecting the Apostle and the church of Alexandria, can be shown to be erroneous; but this would lead us beyond the legitimate boundaries of our work: it may be sufficient, however, to advert to the accounts by Eusebius, Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap, 24; and Jerome, Cat. Script., on the subject of the bishopric of Mark in Alexandria, and his death in the eighth year of Nero, as inconsistent with what we learn from 2 Tim. iv. 11. This difficulty can only be surmounted, by supposing that there were two of the first Preachers of the Gospel of that name. (Burton's Eccles. Hist., vol. i., sect. x.) The precise time of his martrydom is not determined by the ancients. Dr. Cave says, that Kirstenius, out of the Arabic memoirs of his life, asserts, that it was in the last year of Claudius. Jerome places it in the eighth of Nero. But extravagantly wide is the computation of Dorotheus, who supposes that he suffered in the time of Trajan: with equal resemblance of truth, Nicephorus affirms that he came into Egypt in the reign of Tiberius. If in so great variety

JAMES THE LESS, surnamed the "brother" of our Lord, (Gal. i. 19,) was the son of Cleophas, otherwise called Alphæus, and Mary, sister to the blessed Virgin; consequently he was cousin-german to Jesus Christ. By some, doubts have been entertained, whether James the Less was not the Bishop of Jerusalem: others have imagined, that three persons of the name of James are presented to us in the history of the Christian church; namely, James the Elder, and James the Less, both of whom were Apostles, and a third surnamed the Just, distinct, as they say, from the former two, and Bishop of the metropolis of Judea. The latter idea is evidently founded on a mistake, inasmuch as the Scripture mentions but two of this name; one who suffered under Herod, and the other, whom Paul calls our Lord's brother, whom he designates as one of the pillars of the church, presiding among the Apostles, and governing in the Synod of Jerusalem. Of the place of his birth, the sacred history makes no mention. What were his particular way and course of life before he was called to the discipleship and apostolate, we find no intimations in the Gospel record, nor any distinct account of him during our Saviour's life. After the resurrection, he was honoured with a particular appearance of our Lord, which, though silently passed over by the Evangelists, is recorded by the Apostle Paul. Next to the manifestation of himself to the five hundred brethren, "He was seen of James," (1 Cor. xv. 7,) which is by all understood of our Apostle. Of this interview, Jerome gives the following account: he states, that James had solemnly sworn, that from the time that he had drunk of the cup at the institution of the Lord's supper, he would eat bread no more, until he saw the Lord risen from the dead. It is, therefore, said, that "very soon after the Lord was risen, he went to James, and showed himself to him. It is added, that the Lord said, "Bring a table, and bread." And afterwards, "He took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and then gave it to James the Just, and said to him, My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of man is risen from among them that sleep."* To him, we find Paul after his conversion making his address, (Gal. i. 19; ii. 9,) by whom, also, he was honoured with the right hand of fellowship. To him, also, Peter sent the news of his miraculous deliverance out of prison: (Acts xii. 17:)—"Go show these things unto James, and to the brethren," that is, to the whole church, and especially to James, the Pastor thereof. But he was principally active in the Synod of Jerusalem, in the great controversy about the Mosaic rites; for, the case being opened by Peter, and more largely debated by Paul and Barnabas, James at length stood up and passed the final and decretory sentence, that the

of opinions I may interpose my conjecture, says Cave, I should reckon him to have suffered about the end of Nero's reign; for, supposing him to have come with Peter to Rome, about the fifth or sixth year of that Emperor, he might thence be despatched to Alexandria, and spend the residue of his days in planting Christianity in that part of the world. Irenæus reports, that Mark outlived Peter and Paul, and that after their decease he composed his Gospel out of those things which he had heard Peter preach. Be that as it may, it is evident that Irenæus supposed that Mark survived the martyrdom of those eminent Apostles.

* Lardner's Works, vol. vi., p. 163.

Gentile converts were not to be troubled with the bondage of the Jewish yoke, only that, for present accommodation, some few indifferent rites should be observed. (Acts xv. 13, &c.)

Eusebius says, that James was appointed Bishop * of Jerusalem, by the Apostles; and elsewhere, that he was placed in that metropolis by Christ himself, and the twelve. Jerome, in his Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers, states, that "James, surnamed the Just, was ordained Bishop of Jerusalem by the Apostles, soon after our Lord's passion." In his Commentary upon the Epistle to the Galatians, he speaks as if the Lord had given him this high trust, perhaps implying, that Christ gave it to him by his disciples, or that they acted by divine inspiration. Epiphanius ascribes this appointment to our Saviour himself: so also do Chrysostom, Œcumenius, Photius, and many others.

Be that as it may, he administered to the necessities of his province with diligence and care, performing every duty, as an industrious and faithful guide of the souls committed to his charge.† He strengthened the weak, instructed the ignorant, reclaimed the erroneous, reproved the obstinate, and, by the constancy of his preaching, conquered the perverseness and stupidity of that stubborn and refractory generation which were around him; many of whom, of superior character, were brought to the obedience of the faith: so careful, and yet so successful was he, in his endeavours to do good, that he aroused the malignity of his adversaries, a description of men of whom the Apostle has given a true, although humiliating, character: "They please not God, and are contrary to all men." He governed the church in the midst of perpetual danger, and violent persecution from the fury of the people at large; but his singular probity and general uprightness of conduct secured even the veneration of the Jews themselves. With regard to his sanctity, Eusebius ‡ and Jerome § give from Hegesippus (a suspicious authority) the following account:—"He was always a virgin, and was a Nazarite, or, one consecrated to God. In consequence of which he was never shaved, never cut his hair, never drank any wine, or other strong liquor; moreover, he never used any bath, or oil to anoint his limbs, and

* Though the office of Elder might be wanting, owing to the necessities of the local churches in different towns, it may perhaps be inferred, that the absence of the Apostles in visiting these churches, led also to the creation of a new office, and to an appointment of still greater importance in the church of Jerusalem. The early writers are unanimous in speaking of James, as the first Bishop of that church. An incidental expression of Paul seems to prove that James was in possession of this authority very soon after his conversion: therefore, the conjecture is confessedly easy, that the rest of the Apostles appointed him to superintend the church at Jerusalem, when they found themselves so repeatedly called away to distant parts of the country. The term "Bishop" is adopted in accordance with the statement of all the ecclesiastical writers, though it is by no means implied, that this was the title given at first to James; or that the office which he bore was analogous to that of "Bishop" in later times. (Dr. Edward Burton.)

† Eusebius says, that the episcopal chair in which James was used to sit, was preserved to his time, and was had in veneration by the church at Jerusalem. (Hist. Eccles., lib. vii., cap. 19.)

‡ Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 23.

§ Hieron., in Jovin., lib. ii., cap. 24.

never ate of any living creature, except when of precept, as the paschal lamb; he never wore sandals, never used any other clothes than one single garment. He prostrated so much in prayer, that the skin of his knees and forehead was hardened like to camel's hoofs." Epiphanius* says, that in a great drought, on stretching out his arms to heaven, he, by his prayers, instantly obtained rain. His eminent piety made even the Jews style him "a just man;" an epithet which it will be remembered is never used in the New Testament but to the Lord of life and glory: James was so called by many. Eusebius says, that he was called "the Just," on account of the eminence of his virtue.† He is so designated frequently in passages of Clement of Alexandria. Hegesippus‡ says, he had been called "the Just" by all from our Saviour's time to his own; and Jerome, in the commencement of his account of him, says, "that James, the Lord's brother, was surnamed the Just." All, therefore, that can be gathered from sacred and other history respecting him, is, that he was sometimes called the Less, the son of Alphæus, and our Lord's brother, either the son of Joseph by a former wife, or a relation of his mother Mary; and that he was one of Christ's Apostles. We have no account of when he was called to the apostleship; nor is there anything said of him particularly in the history of our Saviour. But from the Acts, and from Paul's Epistles, we can perceive that he was of note among the Apostles. Soon after the death of Stephen, he was appointed President, or Superintendent, in the church of Jerusalem, where, and in Judea, he resided during the remaining part of his life. §

Under the firm administration of Festus, the Christians in Palestine were comparatively free from persecution; and the statement is confirmed by what took place at his decease. He died about the eighth or tenth year of the reign of Nero; and as soon as the news of his death arrived at Rome, Albinus was appointed to succeed him. Some time, however, elapsed, before the new Procurator reached his government; and the High Priest took advantage of the interregnum to molest the church. The office of High Priest had been frequently changed about this period. Agrippa, who still resided at Jerusalem, had lately appointed Joseph, and shortly after Ananus, or Annus, the son of the Annas, whose name is connected with the crucifixion of our Saviour. This was the fifth of his sons, beside his son-in-law Caiaphas, who had held the pontifical dignity; and the present High Priest, being a Sadducee, had, probably, additional motives for showing hostility to the Christians. He had not long to wait for an opportunity. The Jews had recently been exasperated at the failure of their sanguinary designs against Paul, by his appeal to Cæsar, to whom he had been sent by Festus. The plan of attack which was devised by Ananus, though iniquitous and cruel, was well conceived. The blow was aimed at the head and leader of the party, and the Easter of the year 62 is generally taken to be the period when James the Bishop of Jerusalem was martyred. The atrocious act is alluded to

* Epiphan. Hæres., 78.
† Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 1.
‡ Ibid., lib. ii., cap. 23.
§ Lardner's Works, vol. vi., p. 195.

Gentile converts were not to be troubled with the bondage of the Jewish yoke, only that, for present accommodation, some few indifferent rites should be observed. (Acts xv. 13, &c.)

Eusebius says, that James was appointed Bishop * of Jerusalem, by the Apostles; and elsewhere, that he was placed in that metropolis by Christ himself, and the twelve. Jerome, in his Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers, states, that "James, surnamed the Just, was ordained Bishop of Jerusalem by the Apostles, soon after our Lord's passion." In his Commentary upon the Epistle to the Galatians, he speaks as if the Lord had given him this high trust, perhaps implying, that Christ gave it to him by his disciples, or that they acted by divine inspiration. Epiphanius ascribes this appointment to our Saviour himself: so also do Chrysostom, Œcumenius, Photius, and many others.

Be that as it may, he administered to the necessities of his province with diligence and care, performing every duty, as an industrious and faithful guide of the souls committed to his charge.† He strengthened the weak, instructed the ignorant, reclaimed the erroneous, reproved the obstinate, and, by the constancy of his preaching, conquered the perverseness and stupidity of that stubborn and refractory generation which were around him; many of whom, of superior character, were brought to the obedience of the faith: so careful, and yet so successful was he, in his endeavours to do good, that he aroused the malignity of his adversaries, a description of men of whom the Apostle has given a true, although humiliating, character: "They please not God, and are contrary to all men." He governed the church in the midst of perpetual danger, and violent persecution from the fury of the people at large; but his singular probity and general uprightness of conduct secured even the veneration of the Jews themselves. With regard to his sanctity, Eusebius ‡ and Jerome § give from Hegesippus (a suspicious authority) the following account:—"He was always a virgin, and was a Nazarite, or, one consecrated to God. In consequence of which he was never shaved, never cut his hair, never drank any wine, or other strong liquor; moreover, he never used any bath, or oil to anoint his limbs, and

* Though the office of Elder might be wanting, owing to the necessities of the local churches in different towns, it may perhaps be inferred, that the absence of the Apostles in visiting these churches, led also to the creation of a new office, and to an appointment of still greater importance in the church of Jerusalem. The early writers are unanimous in speaking of James, as the first Bishop of that church. An incidental expression of Paul seems to prove that James was in possession of this authority very soon after his conversion: therefore, the conjecture is confessedly easy, that the rest of the Apostles appointed him to superintend the church at Jerusalem, when they found themselves so repeatedly called away to distant parts of the country. The term "Bishop" is adopted in accordance with the statement of all the ecclesiastical writers, though it is by no means implied, that this was the title given at first to James; or that the office which he bore was analogous to that of "Bishop" in later times. (Dr. Edward Burton.)

† Eusebius says, that the episcopal chair in which James was used to sit, was preserved to his time, and was had in veneration by the church at Jerusalem. (Hist. Eccles., lib. vii., cap. 19.)

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never ate of any living creature, except when of precept, as the paschal lamb; he never wore sandals, never used any other clothes than one single garment. He prostrated so much in prayer, that the skin of his knees and forehead was hardened like to camel's hoofs." Epiphanius* says, that in a great drought, on stretching out his arms to heaven, he, by his prayers, instantly obtained rain. His eminent piety made even the Jews style him "a just man;" an epithet which it will be remembered is never used in the New Testament but to the Lord of life and glory: James was so called by many. Eusebius says, that he was called "the Just," on account of the eminence of his virtue.† He is so designated frequently in passages of Clement of Alexandria. Hegesippus‡ says, he had been called "the Just" by all from our Saviour's time to his own; and Jerome, in the commencement of his account of him, says, "that James, the Lord's brother, was surnamed the Just." All, therefore, that can be gathered from sacred and other history respecting him, is, that he was sometimes called the Less, the son of Alphæus, and our Lord's brother, either the son of Joseph by a former wife, or a relation of his mother Mary; and that he was one of Christ's Apostles. We have no account of when he was called to the apostleship; nor is there anything said of him particularly in the history of our Saviour. But from the Acts, and from Paul's Epistles, we can perceive that he was of note among the Apostles. Soon after the death of Stephen, he was appointed President, or Superintendent, in the church of Jerusalem, where, and in Judea, he resided during the remaining part of his life. §

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by Josephus,* and is related in much detail by Hegesippus, a Christian historian of the second century. The account of the latter has been rescued from oblivion by Eusebius; † and though some parts may have an air of fiction, we may, perhaps, believe the following circumstances substantially true. The High Priest had resolved upon the destruction of James, before the arrival of the new Procurator. The religion of Christ had, for some years, been rapidly spreading in Jerusalem; and many persons of consequence had embraced the true faith. The death of Festus evidently gave to the unbelieving party a greater licence of acting; and their object was plainly developed, when they applied to James, as a person of great weight and influence, to undeceive the people, who were so eagerly running after the new religion. James was placed upon an elevated part of the temple, and was ordered to address himself to the multitude, who were attracted by the festival in the courts below.‡ Ananus and his party could hardly have hoped, that James would so suddenly retract his opinions: there can be no doubt that they only sought a public opportunity for putting him to death. Their wishes were shortly gratified. Being advantageously situated, the Scribes and Pharisees addressed James as follows:—"Tell us, O Justus, whom we have all reason in the world to believe, that, seeing the people are thus generally led away with the doctrine of Jesus that was crucified, tell us what is this institution of the crucified Jesus?" To which the Apostle answered, with an audible voice, "Why do ye inquire of Jesus the Son of man? He sits in heaven, on the right hand of the Majesty on High, and will come again in the clouds of heaven." The people below hearing it, glorified the blessed Jesus, and openly proclaimed, "Hosanna to the son of David!" His adversaries immediately, perceiving that he was confirming the people in their error, resolved forthwith to despatch him. Suddenly they cried out, that Justus was himself seduced, and

* Festus was now dead, and Albinus was upon the road; so he, Ananus, assembled the sanhedrin of Judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was Christ, whose name was James, and some others, some of his companions; and when he had formed an accusation against them, as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned; but as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done; they also sent to the King, (Agrippa,) desiring him to send to Ananus that he should act so no more, for that what he had already done was not to be justified; nay, some of them went also to meet Albinus, as he was upon his journey from Alexandria, and informed him that it was not lawful for Ananus to assemble a sanhedrin without his consent; whereupon Albinus complied with what they said, wrote in anger to Ananus, and threatened that he would bring him to punishment for what he had done; on which King Agrippa took the high priesthood from him, when he had ruled but three months, and made Jesus, the son of Damnœus, High Priest. (Joseph. Antiq., lib. xx., cap. 9., sect. 1.)

† See Le Clerc., Hist. Eccles., Duorum Primorum Sæc., p. 415.

‡ "That his death might be carried in a more plausible and popular way, his enemies set the Scribes and Pharisees at work to ensnare him; who, coming to him, began by flattering insinuations to set upon him. They tell him that they had all a mighty confidence in him, and that the whole nation, as well as they, gave him the testimony of a most just man, and one that was no respecter of persons; that, therefore, they desired he would correct the error and false opinion which the people had of Jesus, whom they looked upon as the Messiah, and would take this opportunity of the universal confluence to the paschal solemnity to set them right in their notions about these things, and would, to that end, go up with them to the top of the temple, where he might be seen and heard of all."—*Hegesip. apud Euseb.*

had become an impostor, and threw him down from the place on which he stood. Though bruised, he was not killed by the fall, but recovered so much strength as to rise upon his knees, and to pray for his murderers. Vexed that they had not completed their purpose, they commenced the attack on the little life which remained, with a shower of stones, until a person out of the crowd despatched him with a fuller's club.*

Such was the tragical end of James the Less, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, to the great grief of all good men, and of every sober and just person among the Jews also, after he had watched over the Christian church in that city for nearly thirty years. It is probable that he was not much employed like the other Apostles in converting distant nations, the Christians of Judea having been committed to his peculiar care; but he has left full proof of the interest which he took in his brethren of every country, if, as there is the greatest reason to believe, he was the author of the Epistle which bears his name. The Epistle of James is addressed to the twelve tribes dispersed throughout the world, by which, of course, we are to understand the Christians in any of the twelve tribes. James must have seen many of these persons when they attended the festivals; and the resident head of the Christian church at Jerusalem was a very fit person to send a circular letter to the Jewish Christians in different countries.† "He was interred," says Gregory, Bishop of Tours, "upon Mount Olivet, in a tomb erected for himself, and in which he had buried Zacharias and good old Simeon," which relation, with Dr. Cave, we are much more inclined to credit, than the account which is recorded by Hegesippus, and accurately retailed by Eusebius, that he was buried near the temple,‡ in the place of his martyrdom, where a monument was erected to his memory, which remained for some time. Such was the reputation in which his sanctity was held, that the latter historian, with Jerome and Origen, attributed the destruction of the metropolis of Judea to the martyrdom of James.

ANDREW THE APOSTLE.—An American writer § observes, that "the name of this Apostle is brought in directly after his eminent brother,

* The accounts by Eusebius and Hegesippus seem more apocryphal. The latter, after a very improbable description of the ascetic life led by James, refers to the rapid progress of the Gospel in Jerusalem; and states, that the Pharisees and Sadducees besought James, in whom they had great confidence, to disabuse the minds of the people, placing him upon the battlement of the temple for this purpose. But, instead of this, he made a confession of his faith in Christ, to the assembled multitude; upon which he was cast down from the temple, and put to death. The severe virtues of James, the respect in which he was held, and his scrupulous observance of the Jewish worship, with his violent death, seem clearly indicated in this legend. (Welsh's Elements.)

† Tillemont Memoires, tom. i., p. 421. 4to. Paris, 1693.

‡ Alban Butler, who faithfully follows in the wake of Hegesippus and Eusebius, says that James was "buried near the temple, in the place in which he was martyred, where a small column was erected." It will be remembered, however, that the Jews were not ordinarily accustomed to bury within the city, much less so near the temple; and least of all would they suffer him whom, as a blasphemer and impostor, they had so lately put to death.

§ Lives of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. By D. Francis Bacon. P. 287. 8vo. New-York, 1846.

(Peter,) in accordance with the lists of the Apostles given by Matthew and Luke in their Gospels, where they seem to dispose them all in pairs; and they very naturally in this case prefer family affinity as a principle of arrangement, placing together, in this and the following instances, those who were sons of the same father. The most eminent son of Jonas, deservedly taking the highest place on all the lists, his brother might very properly so far share in the honours of this distinction, as to be mentioned along with him, without any necessary implication of the possession of any of that moral and intellectual superiority on which Peter's claim to the first place was grounded. These seem at least to have been sufficient reasons for Matthew in arranging the Apostles, and for Luke in his Gospel; while, in his history of the Acts of the Apostles, the latter followed a different plan, putting Andrew fourth on the list, and giving the sons of Zebedee a place before him, as Mark did also. The uniform manner in which James and John are mentioned along with Peter, on great occasions, to the total neglect of Andrew, seems to imply that this Apostle was quite behind his brother in those excellencies which fitted him for a leading place in the great Christian enterprise; since it is most reasonable to believe, that if he had possessed faculties of such a high order, he would have been readily selected to enjoy, with him, the peculiar privileges of a most intimate personal intercourse with Jesus, and to share the high honours of his peculiar revelations of glory and power. The occasions on which the name of this Apostle is mentioned in the New Testament, except in the bare enumeration of the twelve, are only four:—his first introduction to Jesus; his actual call; the feeding of the five thousand, where he said to Jesus, 'There is a lad here with five barley loaves, and two small fishes; but what are these among so many?' and the circumstance of his being present, with his brother and the sons of Zebedee, at the scene on the Mount of Olives, when Christ foretold the utter ruin of the temple. Of these three scenes, in the first only did he perform such a part as to receive any other than a bare mention in the Gospel history; nor even in that solitary circumstance does his conduct seem to have been of much importance, except as leading his brother to the knowledge of Jesus. From the fact, however, of his being specified as the first of all the twelve who had a personal acquaintance with our Lord, he has been honoured by many writers with the distinguishing title of 'the first called,' * although others have claimed the dignity of this appellation for another Apostle."

Andrew was born at Bethsaida, a city of Galilee, a small town situated on the borders of the lake Gennesaret, and son to John, or Jonas, a fisherman of that place: he, with Peter his brother, was brought up to the same profession, at which he laboured until our Lord called him to be a fisher of men. The circumstances attending

* Andrew is designated πρωτοκλητος by Nicephorus Callistus in his Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. xxxix.; and also by several of the Greek Fathers, as quoted by Cangius, (Gloss. in voc.,) and referred to by Lampe. (Prolegom. in Joannem.) Suicer, however, makes no reference to this term.

this latter event are worthy of a brief notice. John the Baptist had but recently appeared in Judea, a person who, for the efficacy and power of his doctrine, and the strictness and austerity of his life, was held in very high repute. He trained up his proselytes under the discipline of repentance; and, by inculcating upon them reformation of life, he prepared them to entertain the teaching of the Messiah, whose approach he signified was near at hand. Besides the number who flocked to hear him from Judea, and the region round about Jordan, John had, according to the custom of Jewish teachers, some peculiar and select disciples, who constantly attended his lectures, and waited upon his person. In this company was Andrew. It was in one of those perambulatory excursions in which a master was accustomed to indulge, surrounded by his followers, that our Saviour came that way. John immediately informed them that this was the Messiah of whom he had so often spoken, the Lamb of God, the true sacrifice, which was to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. With one accord two of John's hearers left him, who now referred them to a higher source of truth and purity, and followed the footsteps of this wonderful stranger, of whose real character they knew nothing, though their curiosity must have been highly excited by the solemn mystery of the words in which his greatness was announced, "Behold the Lamb of God!" They hurried after him, the sound of their hasty feet was heard, and the retiring stranger, turning towards his anxious pursuers, mildly inquired, "Whom seek ye?" The opportunity thus afforded to state their wishes was eagerly embraced; and thus commenced an acquaintance which continued during life. Andrew being convinced that he whom he called the Messiah was all that he had been declared to be, immediately sought Simon his brother, to whom he said, "We have found the Messiah." This announcement immediately arrested the attention of Simon, who was forthwith conducted to Christ. Long, however, they did not remain, but returned to their own home, and the exercise of their calling.

About twelve months after their return, our Lord, passing through Galilee, and walking by the sea-shore, saw two fishing-vessels, one belonging to Peter and Andrew, the other to James and John; who, after a toilsome night, without success, were drying their nets on the beach. Jesus, being crowded by the people who had followed him out of Capernaum, stepped into Andrew's vessel, and desired Peter to put off a little from the shore, and from thence he addressed the multitude. Having concluded his discourse, he confirmed his doctrine by a miracle. He commanded Peter to stand yet farther off from the shore, and to cast his net for a draught. Peter replied, that, though they had spent a laborious and fruitless night, nevertheless, at his bidding, they would try again. He did so; and took such a quantity of fish, that they were obliged to call their partners in the other boat to come to their aid, and both vessels were filled with the produce. This miracle, so seasonably performed, plainly declared to the fishermen, and to the rest of the multitude, the Divinity and Godhead of Christ: our Lord then bade Andrew and Peter,

with James and John, to follow him, and they left their all and followed him; and from thenceforward they became the constant and inseparable disciples and companions of our Saviour. Soon after, Andrew and the rest were raised to the office and character of Apostles, appointed to preach the Gospel, and to propagate the faith of Christ throughout the world.

After the ascension of the Saviour, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, Andrew is supposed to have preached the truth in a variety of places; but little confidence is to be placed in the several authorities which are adduced. Origen says that Andrew preached the Gospel in Scythia; and we should be inclined to receive the statement as true, though the expression is a vague one; and the ancients would have spoken of any part of the north of Europe as Scythia.* Sophronius, who wrote soon after Jerome, and translated his Catalogue of Illustrious Men, and some other works, into Greek, says that he preached in the country called Sogdiana, and in the neighbourhood of Colchis, upon the Euxine. A church is also said to have been founded by him at Byzantium; but there is no evidence, of any authority, which should incline us to believe it.† There is, perhaps, more room for discussion, whether he did not latterly alter the direction of his travels, and visit different parts of Greece. The testimony though not very early, is at least respectable, for his having preached in Epirus and Achaia.‡ Paulinus says, this divine fisherman, preaching at Argos, put all the philosophers in that city to silence. Phi-

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. iii., cap. 1; Burton's Lectures on the Ecclesiastical History of the First Century, p. 328.

† Tillemont Memoires, tom. i., p. 619.

‡ Theodoreti Opera, tom. i., pars ii., in Psalmum cxvi., p. 1425. 8vo. Halæ, 1769; Greg. Nazianz., Opera, fol., p. 426. Antw., 1612. The most rational conjecture, about the subsequent proceedings of Andrew, would be that he moved along with Peter before the destruction of Jerusalem. With this allowable supposition, and also with the general voice of ancient accounts, respecting the great majority of the Galilean Apostles, the earliest and best-authenticated tradition respecting Andrew agrees perfectly. The original account of him is quoted from one of the most trustworthy and judicious of the Fathers: still, dating as late as the third century, and mixed as it is with known fabulous matter, it would be entitled to little respect, except from its striking correspondence with the general facts alluded to. This early statement is, that "at the time when Palestine was disturbed by the seditions of the Jews against the Romans, the Apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ, scattered throughout the world, preached the Gospel." All these facts are referred to ancient tradition; and, among the rest, on this authority, Andrew is mentioned as having received Scythia as his field of duty. The country thus named, lay on the farthest eastern border of the ancient Parthian and Persian empire, in the northern part of the great valley of the Indus, now occupied by the eastern part of Affghanistan, or Cabul, and by the provinces of Cashmere and Lahore. This was the true Scythia of the ancients; it was in this region where the great Persian Cyrus lost his life, and where the conquering Alexander met his most determined and dangerous foes; and all the most ancient accounts, in the same decisive manner, refer to this as the country properly and originally called Scythia, though many who have assumed the task of settling ancient geography have absurdly applied the name to the ancient Sarmatia, corresponding to the modern Russia, west of the Caspian and Volga. The name of Scythia was, by the later Greek and Roman geographers, extended to the vast regions north of Persia and India, and east of the Ural mountains, and the Caspian sea, stretching over the range of Imaus to an unknown distance, north and east, occupying all Little Tartary, south western Siberia, and western Chinese Tartary. A later account of Andrew further particularizes the regions to which he went, as Sogdiana, now Bokhara, and the country of the Sacæ, in Little Thibet; a statement which, coinciding nearly as it does with the earlier accounts, deserves some credit. See Butler's Atlas of Ancient Geography; Bacon's Lives of the Apostles.

lastrius tells us, that he came out of Pontus into Greece; and that, in his time, the people of Synope were persuaded that they had his true picture, and the pulpit in which he had preached in that place. Tradition informs us, that when at the latter city, he was met by Peter. The same *veritable* authority also asserts, that the inhabitants of this place, being principally Jews, partly through zeal for the faith of their fathers, and partly through the barbarity of their manners, treated Andrew with great inhumanity and cruelty, attempting to burn the house wherein he dwelt, and dragging his person about the streets: to such a height of atrocity did the malice of some lead them, that they bit off his flesh with their teeth, and then, thinking they had killed him, they threw him out of the city; but he, miraculously recovering, returned, and by the efficacy and vigour of his preaching, and the number and magnitude of the miracles he performed, brought the people to a better temper, and converted many to the faith. The Muscovites have long gloried that Andrew carried the Gospel into their country as far as the mouth of the Borysthenes, and to the mountains where the city of Kiow now stands, and to the frontiers of Poland. If the ancients mean European Scythia, when they speak of the theatre of the Apostle's labours, this authority is favourable to the pretensions of the Muscovites. The Greeks understand it of Scythia beyond Sebastopolis in Colchis, and perhaps also of the European; for they say he planted the faith in Thrace. In many of the adjacent places Andrew is supposed to have preached and propagated Christianity, and to have confirmed the doctrine that he taught by signs and miracles and mighty deeds. At length he came to Patræ, a city of Achaia, where he is said to have given his last and great testimony to the truth.

In giving a description of his martyrdom, we shall follow the account that is recorded in "the Acts of his Passion," * supposed to have been written by the Presbyters and Deacons of Achaia, who were present; and, although we cannot vouch for the genuineness of that document, it is certainly of great antiquity, being referred to by Philastrius, who flourished in the year 380, and was doubtless written before his time. The substance is as follows:—Ægeas came about this time to Patræ, where, observing that multitudes had fallen off from Paganism, and had embraced Christianity, he endeavoured, by numerous devices, both of favour and cruelty, to reduce the people to their old practices. To him the Apostle resolutely made his address, and calmly put him in mind, that he, being but a judge of men, should own and revere Him who was the supreme and impartial Judge of all; that he should render to Him the honour which was due, and renounce the impieties of a false and heathen worship. The Proconsul reviled him as an innovator and a propagator of that superstition whose Author the Jews had ignominiously put to

* "The Acts," &c., have been fully proved to be spurious and apocryphal: they are not found in any of the ancient catalogues of the sacred books, nor appealed to by any Christian writer, nor read in any of their assemblies; but, on the contrary, expressly condemned as an impious forgery by every one that has mentioned them. There are not, indeed, any fragments of the book now remaining. (Jones on the Canon, vol. i., p. 135. 8vo. Oxford, 1827.)

death upon a cross. Hence the Apostle took occasion to address him on the infinite love and kindness of Christ, who came into the world to purchase the salvation of mankind, and for that end did not disdain to die upon the cross. To which the Proconsul answered, that he might persuade them so that would believe him; but for his part, if he did not comply with his mandate, in offering sacrifice to the gods, he would cause him to suffer upon that cross which he had so much extolled and magnified. Andrew replied, that he offered sacrifice daily unto God, the only true and omnipotent Being, not with incense and bloody offerings, but with spiritual oblations, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ. The Apostle was committed to prison. At this the people were so enraged, that an insurrection would have been the result, had not Andrew restrained them, and persuaded them to imitate the patience and meekness of the Redeemer, and not by any uproar intercept the crown of martyrdom which appeared to await him.

The following day he was again brought into the presence of the Proconsul, who endeavoured to persuade him not foolishly to destroy himself, but to live and enjoy the pleasures of this life. The Apostle hesitated not to inform this officer of state, that he should possess with him eternal felicity, if he would renounce his execrable idolatries, and embrace the religion of the Saviour, which had so successfully been preached among them. "That," responded Ægeas, "is the very reason why I am so earnest with you to sacrifice to the gods, that those whom you have seduced may, by your example, be brought back to that religion which they have forsaken; otherwise, I will cause you, with exquisite tortures, to be crucified." The Apostle replied, that now he saw it was in vain any longer to converse with him; that he was a man incapable of receiving counsel, and hardened in his blindness and folly; that, as for himself, he might do his worst, and if he had one torment greater than another, he might inflict that upon him; for the greater constancy he manifested in his sufferings for Christ, the more acceptable it would be to his Lord and Master. Ægeas could not refrain any longer, and immediately pronounced upon Andrew the sentence of death.* The Proconsul first commanded him to be scourged, seven lictors successively whipping his naked body; and then, witnessing his invincible patience and firmness, he ordered him to be crucified; and in order to render the death of the martyr more lingering and tedious, he was fastened to the cross, not with nails, but with cords. As he was led to execution, to which he went with cheerfulness and composure, the people exclaimed that he was an innocent and good man, and unjustly condemned. When he came within sight of the cross,† he is said

* Nicephorus gives a more particular account of the displeasure and rage of the Proconsul. He relates that Andrew had been instrumental in the conversion of Maximilla, the wife of Ægeas, and of his brother Stratocles, having cured them of desperate maladies with which they had been afflicted.

† Besides various fictions which have been published with regard to Andrew, a work entitled, "The Passion of St. Andrew," of a highly apocryphal notoriety, professing to have been written by the Elders and Deacons of the churches of Achaia, was long extensively received by the Papists as an authentic and valuable book; and is quoted

to have saluted it with the following address:—"Hail, precious cross, that hast been consecrated by the body of my Lord, and adorned with his limbs, as with rich jewels! I come to thee exulting and glad: receive me with joy into thy arms. O good cross that hast received beauty from our Lord's limbs, I have ardently loved thee; long have I desired and sought thee; now thou art found by me, and art made ready for my longing soul; receive me into thy arms, take me from among men, present me to my Master." * Upon reading these sentiments, Bernard, the Abbot of Clairvaux, thus writes: "Seeing at a distance the cross prepared for him, his countenance did not change, nor his blood freeze in his veins, nor did his hair stand on end, nor did he lose his voice, nor did his body tremble, nor was his soul troubled, nor did his senses fail him, as it happens to human frailty: out of the abundance of the heart the mouth spoke, and the charity which was hot within, was as though it emitted burning sparks in the voice."† Having prayed, and exhorted the people to fidelity and perseverance in the truths which he had taught them, he was fastened to the cross,‡ on which he hung two days, and then expired.§ His body is supposed to have been honourably interred by Maximilla. Gregory, the Bishop of Tours, a great retailer of wonders, declares that on the anniversary of his martyrdom, a most fragrant and precious oil was wont to flow from Andrew's tomb, which, according to the quantity that flowed, indicated the plenty or scarcity of the following year: he also states, that on the sick and infirm being anointed with this oil, they were restored to health. Dr. Cave adds, "I believe it no more than that it was an exhalation of those rich and costly perfumes and ointments with which his body

by the eloquent and venerable Bernard with profound respect. It abounds in long, tedious harangues, and painfully absurd incidents. The "Menæon, or Greek Calendar of the Saints," is also copious on this Apostle; but it is too modern to deserve any credit whatsoever. All the ancient fables and traditions were collected into one huge volume, by a Frenchman named Andrew de Saussey, who, in 1656, published at Paris (in Latin) a book entitled, "Andrew, brother of Simon Peter; or, Twelve Books on the Glory of St. Andrew, the Apostle." This book was afterwards abridged, or largely borrowed from, by John Florian Hammerschmid, in a Latin treatise published at Prague, in 1699, entitled, "Cruciger Apostolicus," &c.: "The apostolic Cross-bearer; or, St. Andrew, the Apostle, described and set forth, in his Life, Death, Martyrdom, Miracles, and Discourses." Baillet, "Vie des Saintes," vol. iii., Nov. 30th, contains also a full account of the most remarkable details of these fables. (See Surius, De Probatis Sanctorum, tom. vi., Nov. 30th. Folio.)

* See Acts and Passion of St. Andrew; Bernardi Sermo De Sancto Andrea Apostolo.

† Bernardi Opera, tom. ii., De Sancto Andrea, Serm. ii., fol., p. 156. Lugd., 1687.

‡ Sophronius, Gaudentius, and Augustine, assure us that he was crucified; Peter Chrysologus says, it was on a tree; and Pseudo-Hyppolytus adds, on an olive-tree.

§ It was the common opinion, that the cross of Andrew was in the form of the letter X, and called a cross *decussate*, composed of two pieces of timber crossing each other obliquely in the middle. There is proof, however, that in the time of Bernard, this idle story was unknown; for it is evident, that, in the fancifully-figurative language of the Abbot of Clairvaux, the martyr, if such he was, suffered on a cross of the common shape, upright, with a transverse bar, and head-piece. Natalis Alexander affords additional evidence of the modern character of this idle invention. He says, "Crux quæ martyrii ejus instrumentum fuit, in cœnobio Massiliensi S. Victoris dicitur asservari, ejusdem figuræ cum Dominica cruce." "The cross which was the instrument of Andrew's martyrdom, is said to be preserved in the convent of St. Victor, at Marseilles, and to be of the same shape with the cross of our Lord." (Natalis Alexandri Opera, tom. iii., sæc. i., cap. viii., sect. 3. Folio. Paris, 1714.) This, also, is legendary; but it serves to show that the notice of Andrew's cross being a *saltier*, is modern.

was embalmed after his crucifixion;" though he acknowledges this conjecture to be impossible, if it were true what Gregory says, that in some years the oil flowed in such abundance, that the stream rose to the middle of the church. Jerome informs us, that his body was afterwards removed to Constantinople by Constantine the Great, and buried in the great church which he had erected in honour of the Apostles, which being pulled down some hundred years after by the Emperor Justinian, in order that it might be rebuilt, Andrew's remains were found in a wooden coffin, which were left to repose in a proper place. Thus far Cave.*

CHAPTER III.

*Opprobrious Epithets given to the Christians—General Testimony in their Favour—Ill-Treatment of them under Nero—"Evil-Doers"—*PETER*—His Birth and Parentage—His Occupation—His Calling by the Saviour—Dr. Cave quoted—Julian the Apostate—Celsus—Origen—Peter's Character exhibited—The Cursing of the Fig-tree—Peter's Trial and Fall—Scenes of the Day of Pentecost—Change which took place in the Apostle—The Miracle in Solomon's Porch—Peter and John before the Sanhedrim—Are liberated—State of the Jewish People with regard to Christ—Reason of the Conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees—Christ no Object of Envy to the Romans—Great Hatred of the Chief Priests—Sadducees and Pharisees—Remarks on Caiaphas and Annas, the High Priest—Apostles imprisoned—Miraculously rescued—They appear before the Council—And are dismissed—Punishment of Scourging—Gamaliel—Traditions respecting him—Church is persecuted—Saul of Tarsus—Philip the Deacon—Samaria—Simon Magus—Miraculous Powers—The Magician is reproved—History of Simon—Gnosticism—Platonism—Moses and Plato—Doctrines of Simon—Danger of the Church—Herod Agrippa—Persecutes the Church—Slays James—And arrests Peter—He is imprisoned—A Roman Guard—Castle of Antonia—Peter is delivered—Leaves the City—Contradictory Opinions concerning Peter's Destination—The persecuted Church at Rome—Peter visits that City—Encounters Simon—Ancient Tradition—Peter vanquishes the Impostor—Simon proposes to fly—Perishes in the Attempt—Rage of Nero—Peter apprehended—Mamertine Prisons—Legendary Tale of the Apparition of the Saviour—Peter's Martyrdom—Supposed Fate of his Remains—Remarks on his Character*

IT was not until a later period of Nero's reign, that a terrific and persevering onslaught was made on the Christian church, with the sanguinary intention of rooting out the name of Christ from the face

* Alban Butler, following in the wake of numerous fanatical writers, says, the body of Andrew was translated from Patræ, to Constantinople, A.D. 357, together with those of Luke and Timothy, and deposited in the church of the Apostles, which Constantine had built a few years before. Paulinus and Jerome mention miracles wrought on that occasion. The churches of Milan, Nola, Brescia, and some other places, were at the same time enriched with small portions of these relics, as we are informed by Ambrose, Gaudentius, and some others. When the city of Constantinople was taken by the French, Cardinal Peter of Capua brought the relics of Andrew into Italy, A.D. 1210, and deposited them in the cathedral of Amalphi, where they still remain. Thomas, the Despot, when the Turks had made themselves masters of Constantinople, travelling from Greece into Italy, and carrying with him the head of Andrew, presented it to Pius II., A.D. 1461, who allotted him a monastery for his dwelling, with a competent revenue, as is related by George Phranze, the last of the Byzantine historians, who wrote in four books the history of the Greek Emperors, after the Latins had lost Constantinople; with a curious account of the siege and plunder of that city by the Turks, in which tragical scene he had a great share, being Protovestiarius, one of the chief officers in the Emperor's court, and army. (Lives of the Saints.)

of the earth. Individuals professing the true faith were at this time suffering under an accusation that they were "evil-doers," * malefactors and criminals, obnoxious to punishment. This was a state of affairs hitherto unparalleled in history. In all the records which are extant of the attacks made upon them by their enemies, it is evident that no accusation was ever brought or sustained, with reference to moral or legal offences, but they were always recognised as Dissenters and separatists. At Corinth, the independent and equitable Gallio dismissed them from the judgment-seat, with the upright decision, that the Christians were chargeable with no crime whatsoever. (Acts xviii. 12—17.) Felix and Festus, with Agrippa II., alike esteemed the whole procedure against Paul as merely a theological or religious affair, relating to doctrines, and not to deeds. At Ephesus, one of the high authorities of the city declared, unequivocally, in the teeth of a furious and ungovernable mob, who were raging against Paul and his companions, that they were innocent of all crime. (Acts xix. 21—41.) Even about the middle of the reign of Nero, the name of "Christian" had so little of an odious and criminal character, that Agrippa did not hesitate to assert, before a great and solemn assembly of Jews and Romans, that he was almost persuaded to be a Christian. (Acts xxvi. 28.) The whole stream of ecclesiastical history, up to this point, shows that, so far from the idea of assailing Christianity *en masse*, as guilty of criminal offences, and its name indicative of everything that was atrocious and bad, no vestige of such attack can be found, until Nero charged the Christians with his own wretched offence, of causing the dreadful conflagration of the imperial city. Immediately they became objects of scorn and obloquy, and were dragged to trial as thieves and murderers, and as outcasts, who were secretly conspiring against the public peace and safety. Rabanus † says, "Some were slain with the sword, some burnt with fire, some scourged with whips, some stabbed with forks of iron, some fastened to the cross or gibbet, some drowned in the sea, some had their skin plucked off, some their tongues cut out, some stoned to death, some killed with cold, some starved with hunger, some had their hands amputated, and otherwise dismembered." Hence Augustine hesitated not to say, "They were bound, they were imprisoned, they were whipped, they were tortured, they were burnt, they were butchered, they were killed,—they were multiplied; not fighting for life, but undervaluing their lives for the sake of Christ."

The precise period of the birth of Peter cannot be ascertained: he is supposed to have been about ten years older than our Lord. This idea, his married condition, his settled course of life at his first approach to Christ, together with the authority and respect which the gravity

* "Evil-doers." The passages in which this word occurs, are, 1 Peter ii. 12; iii. 16; iv. 15. The Greek term is *κακοποιοι*, which means "malefactors," as is shown in John xviii. 30, where the whole point of the remark consists in the fact, that the person spoken of was considered an actual violator of known law; so that the word is evidently limited throughout to those who were criminals in the eye of the law.

† Rabanus was Abbot of the monastery of Fulda, near Hesse-Cassel, and afterwards Archbishop of Mentz: he was born in the year 785, and died 856. His works were printed in 1627, in three volumes, folio.

of his person secured from among the rest of the Apostles, fully justifies. He was born of a humble family at Bethsaida, near the sea of Galilee, otherwise called the Lake of Gennesaret, where he was brought up in an occupation better suited to innocence of life than most. He obtained a livelihood by the laborious and dangerous occupation of fishing, which probably, in accordance with the hereditary succession of trades, common among the Jews, was the calling of his father and ancestors before him. The earliest passage in the life of Peter, of which any record can be found, is given in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel. It appears that Peter and Andrew his brother were at Bethabara, a place on the eastern bank of the Jordan, many miles south of Bethsaida, and that they had left their business for a time, and gone thither, for the sake of hearing and seeing John the Baptist, who was then preaching in Judea, and baptizing in Jordan. Andrew enrolled himself among his disciples, and was honoured by him with the revelation of the Messiah in Jesus. He and his brother immediately attached themselves to the Saviour, and were chosen among his Apostles. "And here," says Dr. Cave, "we may justly reflect upon the wise and admirable methods of the divine Providence, which, in planting and propagating the Christian religion, made choice of such mean and unlikely instruments; and that he should hide these things from the wise and prudent, and reveal them unto babes, to men that had not been educated in the academy and schools of learning, but brought up to a trade, to catch fish, and to mend nets; most of the Apostles being taken from the meanest, and all of them, with the exception of Paul, unfurnished with the arts of learning, and the advantages of a liberal education; and yet these were the men who were designed to run down the world, and to overturn the learning of the prudent. Certainly, had human wisdom managed the business, it would have taken opposite measures, and have chosen from the most profound Rabbins, the most acute philosophers, and the smoothest orators, those who would have been the best qualified, by strength of art and reason, to have triumphed over the minds of men, by grappling with the stubbornness of the Jew, and baffling the finer notions and speculations of the Greek. We find that those sects of philosophers which gained most credit in the heathen world, attained to it by being eminent in some of the arts and sciences, whereby they recommended themselves to the acceptance of the wiser and more ingenious part of mankind. Julian the Apostate thought it a reasonable exception against the Jewish Prophets, that they were incompetent messengers and interpreters of the divine will, because they had not their minds cleared, by passing through the circle of polite arts and learning. Why now," continues the historian, "this is the wonder of it, that the first Preachers of the Gospel should be such rude and unlearned men, and yet so suddenly, so powerfully prevail over the learned world, and conquer so many, who had the greatest parts and abilities, and the strongest prejudices against it, to the simplicity of the Gospel. When Celsus objected that the Apostles were but a company of mean and illiterate persons, sorry mariners and fishermen,—Origen quickly

returned upon him with the following answer: *—'That, hence it was plainly evident, that they taught Christianity by a divine power, when such persons were able, with such an uncontrolled success, to subdue men to the obedience of the word; for that they had no eloquent tongues, no subtle and discursive head, none of the refined and rhetorical arts of Greece, to conquer the minds of men.' In another place,† Origen observes, 'I verily believe that the holy Jesus purposely made use of such Preachers of his doctrine, that there might be no suspicion that they came instructed in arts of sophistry; but that it might be clearly manifest to all the world, that there was no crafty design in it; and that they had a divine power going along with them, which was more efficacious than the greatest volubility of expression, or ornaments of speech, or the artifices which were used in Greek composition. Had it not been for this divine power,' as he elsewhere argues,‡ 'the Christian religion must needs have sunk under those weighty pressures that lay upon it; having not only to contend with the potent opposition of the Senate, Emperors, people, and the whole power of the Roman empire; but to conflict with those home-bred wants and necessities, wherewith its own professors were oppressed and burdened.'" §

We find that, after Jesus had been rejected at Nazareth, he made the sea of Gennesaret the chief scene of his preaching, and took up his abode in the house of Peter, which was now at Capernaum, a considerable town on the northern shore. Hence, he often crossed the lake to go to the other side. It was on one of these occasions that Peter exhibited a very lively mark of his character. Jesus had despatched his disciples forward in the ship on their return to Capernaum. Himself stayed the evening and night on a lonely mountain, engaged in prayer. In the fourth watch of the night, which would be between three and six in the morning, he followed them, walking on the sea. The disciples were affrighted at the supernatural sight, especially as the sea was now exceedingly rough. They cried out through fear. Jesus exclaimed, sufficiently loud to be heard by them in the boat, "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid." Peter, whose courage was high, and faith in his Master unbounded, answered and said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." The Lord bade him, and he walked a little way. But shortly the roughness of the waves, and boisterousness of the winds, frightened him. He lost his resolution and his confidence, and, beginning to sink, cried, "Lord save me." Jesus, gently rebuking his want of faith, caught him, and took him into the boat. This incident was quite a foreshadowing of his denial, and should have taught him how weak he was, and deterred him from those rash professions into which his ardent temper was hurrying him. ‖

It cannot be supposed that Peter could readily dismiss this event from his mind, together with that of the transfiguration which subse-

* Origen cont. Celsum, lib. i., sect. 62. 4to. Cantab., 1677.
† Ibid., lib. iii., sect. 39.
‡ Ibid., lib. i., sect. 3. 4to. Cantab., 1677.
§ Cave's Lives of the Apostles, pp. 140, 142.
‖ Evans's Scripture Biography, p. 228.

quently occurred. Its effects are clearly traceable in his future conduct. His rash confidence increased, and in proportion his real faith diminished. He was less able to abide the trial of the contrast of a scene of the deepest humiliation with that of exceeding glory. His Master, who knew the workings of his heart, and who loved him, took occasion to warn him beyond all the rest of his disciples. The triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem lighted up afresh the fiery confidence of Peter, and his Master redoubled his warnings. On one of their daily walks, during the last week of his earthly sojourn, from Bethany, Jesus cursed a barren fig-tree. Next morning, as they passed again that way, Peter beheld it withered. He remarked this to Jesus, who answered, "Have faith in God," and proceeded to show its wonderful efficacy. But Peter appeared to note none of these significant hints; and the nearer the period of his trial drew nigh, the more confident he became. That hour now approached. They had finished the last supper which they were to take together, and Jesus walked with his Apostles towards the Mount of Olives. On the way he warned them of the stumbling-block which was now at their very feet. "All ye shall be offended because of me this night," said he; "for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered." Peter would not submit in silence and resignation to this sad prediction. He answered, with the somewhat angry feeling of one whose unshaken fidelity is unjustly distrusted, "Though all shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." Jesus said unto him, "Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." But he spake the more vehemently, "If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise." Peter had committed the sad mistake which has so often occurred in the church, that his trial would be one of personal courage. He was prepared for a battle, and indeed commenced one in his Master's defence, wounding with the sword one of the High Priest's servants. But he was not prepared to see that Lord, whom he had beheld in glory, standing as a criminal at the bar of that High Priest, and arraigned before the spiritual head of his nation. What a scene for a zealous believing Jew,—Jesus and the High Priest confronted! What a scene for him that believed in Jesus as the Christ,—Jesus, the irresistible, the victorious King of all the earth, awaiting his sentence from the mouth of the High Priest! It was in this moment of inextricable perplexity, of stupifying amazement, that the enemy tempted Peter before the servants of the High Priest. Thrice was he attacked with the charge, "Thou wast also with Jesus of Galilee;" and thrice, and each time with greater vehemence, he denied all knowledge of him. And immediately the cock crew. Then it was that the Lord turned, and looked earnestly on Peter. All his affectionate admonition, all his gentle repulsion of his rash protestations, came at once into Peter's mind, and overwhelmed him with sorrow and shame. He went out, and wept bitterly. Such was the first denial of Christ in his church. It took place in one of the most pre-eminent of the Apostles, as if to make the warning the more awful. And it arose from a vain confi-

dence, reposing on a carnal view of the blessed Gospel. From the same origin have arisen all the denials of our Lord, which have since taken place.*

Our Saviour having ascended to "his Father and our Father," the Apostles began to act according to the power and commission which they had received from Him. They first filled up the vacancy which was occasioned by the apostacy of Judas. In process of time, fifty days since the last passover having expired, the feast of Pentecost was at hand when the promise of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, was to be vouchsafed. The Christian community being assembled for religious worship, on a sudden a sound, like that of a mighty wind, rushed in upon them, representing the powerful energy of the Holy Spirit, who was now to be communicated; after which, there appeared flames of fire, in the shape of cloven tongues, resting upon each of the Apostles, doubtless to denote the continued enjoyment of this gift, when requisite. Hence "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost," and enabled forthwith to speak, in other languages than their own, of the "wonderful works of God," in the grand scheme of human redemption. With these tokens of the divine presence, the feelings and thoughts of the Apostles were raised to the highest pitch of exultation and joy; they were seized with such a sacred glow of enthusiasm, as to give utterance to their emotions in words, and spake with such effect, that their hearers were pricked in their hearts, and cried, "What shall we do?" and on that day were gathered the first fruits of the church, in the conversion of three thousand souls to the belief in Jesus as the Christ.† The eyes of Peter were now opened. He knew Christ as he was. The Holy Ghost had enlight-

* Evans's Scripture Biography, pp. 231—233.

† "We can hardly doubt," says Dr. Burton, "that of the three thousand persons who were baptized on the day of Pentecost, many, if not most, were foreign Jews. They had come to Jerusalem for the feast, and would now be returning to their several countries. St. Luke enumerates some of the quarters from which they came; and he, perhaps, mentioned those districts in which the Jews were known to be most numerous. Josephus informs us, that there were many myriads of his countrymen beyond the Euphrates, (Antiq., lib. xv., cap. iii., sect. 1; lib. xvii., cap. ii., sect. 2,) who had, probably, remained there ever since the captivity, and kept up constant communication with Jerusalem. The Acts of the Apostles will show, that the Jews abounded through the whole of Asia Minor. In the neighbourhood of Alexandria, or rather, in the whole of Egypt, they are computed by Philo at a million; and with respect to Cyrene, we know of one person who came from that country, and who carried our Saviour's cross. This Simon is described by Mark, as the father of Alexander and Rufus; and it is worthy of remark, that St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, sends a salutation to Rufus and his mother. (Rom. xvi. 13.) If the same Rufus be meant in both places, it is, perhaps, not too much to conclude, that his father Simon was one of the first converts to the Gospel; and he may have been selected to bear the cross of Jesus, as being known to be one of his followers. The Romans, who are said to have been resident in Jerusalem, both Jews and proselytes, may have been the Jews who had been banished from Italy a few years before, by the edict of Tiberius. We know that this edict must have sent several thousand persons to seek an asylum in foreign countries; and there was no place to which they would have looked more naturally, or have been more likely to be kindly received, than Judea. It was about this time that Tiberius revoked his decree, and permitted the Jews to return to Rome; so that many were, perhaps, waiting in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost to be over, that, having been present at its solemnity, they might return to their former residence in Rome. In this way it is not improbable, that within a few weeks after the feast of Pentecost, some persons would be found, who had been baptized into the name of Christ, in Persia and in Egypt, in Rome and in Cyreniaca." (Lect. on Eccles. Hist.)

ened and informed his heart. He was no longer the ambitious minion of an earthly throne, but a Preacher of the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven. "He no longer wielded a temporal sword in his Master's cause, but the sword of the Spirit. The sufferings from which he before shrank as uncongenial with the glorious calling of the Messiah, he now most cheerfully embraced as his distinguishing attribute. And as he was called upon first to preach, so was he also first to suffer." *

In the course of their regular religious observances, Peter, accompanied by John, went up to the temple to pray, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the usual hour of prayer. As they went in at the outer gate of the temple, which, being made of polished Corinthian brass, was for its splendour called, the Beautiful, their attention was directed to an object of compassion, which on days of festivity frequently visited places of public resort. A man, who had been a cripple from birth, was lying in a helpless state at the public entrance, in order to excite the pity of the crowds who were entering into the temple. Seeing Peter and John, he solicited alms from them. They instantly turned their eyes upon him, and said, "Look on us." The cripple, supposing from their manner that they were going to bestow some gratuity, did so. Peter then said, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." As he said this, he took hold of the lame man, and raised him. He was immediately restored. This miracle gathered a great crowd around them in Solomon's Porch, which opportunity Peter embraced of preaching Christ unto the people. He declared, that in His name the miracle had been wrought; that Him whom they had put to death, God had glorified; that the prophecies of holy writ which referred to Messiah, had been accomplished; and that unto them, as children of the Prophets and of the covenant, Christ was first sent and preached. So far had the Apostle proceeded in his harangue, when he was interrupted by the officers of the temple, whom the Sadducees, who were alarmed at the preaching of the doctrine of the resurrection, had instigated. The following morning we find Peter and John before the Sanhedrim, before that very High Priest, with whom he had seen his Master confronted a short time previous. This great court was the same also whose members had, by unwearied exertions, succeeded in bringing about the death of Jesus, and were therefore little disposed to show mercy to any who were endeavouring to propagate his doctrine and name. The individuals constituting the assembly were arrayed to pass judgment; the Apostles and the poor healed mendicant were brought forward, and were questioned by what power, and by what name, they had done the thing for which they were summoned. They were charged with having arrogated to themselves the character and office of teachers, and of reformers of the national faith; of that religion which had been of old received from God, and which the wisdom of a long series of ages had maintained in its sanctity and pureness. Peter being freshly endued with power from on high, and

* Evans's Scripture Biography, p. 236.

full of that divine influence which had been so lately shed abroad, fearlessly announced to the convocation the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and told them, that the stone which they, the builders, had set at nought, had become the head of the corner; that in him, and in no other, was there salvation. At such an address from unlearned and ignorant men, the members of the Council were exceedingly astonished. They recognised them as the followers of Jesus; and, seeing the man whom they had cured, they had nothing to say. They were in much perplexity, and afraid, lest their harsh conduct should attract the greater attention of the people, to whom it was in vain to deny the miracle: they were obliged to be satisfied with commanding Peter and John to preach no more in the name of Jesus; but they replied, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts iv. 19, 20.)

If we glance at the Jewish populace, we shall not fail to discover a strange combination of feeling and action. At one time we find them anxious to make Jesus a King, at another compelling Pilate to put him to death. The former was doubtless their own spontaneous impulse; to the latter they were driven by the Priests. From both, it may be argued, that their feelings towards Jesus of Nazareth had but little to do with religion. They had witnessed his miracles; they knew him to be kind and beneficent; they heard him expose the vices of their superiors, all which raised their curiosity; and whenever he appeared, they could not fail to listen to him with pleasure. Many of the people were zealous for political freedom, and might imagine that this was the object which Christ had ultimately in view; but when he came up to one festival after another, with the same number of obscure followers, when he assumed the headship of no party, and exhibited no resistance to foreign interference, the attachment which many had been inclined to feel towards his person began to subside. If they had felt strongly in his favour, they might now be glad to see him punished, for having raised hopes which he did not realize; and if they had felt but little, they would be perfectly indifferent about the crucifixion. It was otherwise with the Scribes and Pharisees, and the individuals who composed the Jewish Council. To account for the antipathy which they felt to our Lord, we have only to remember the nature of his preaching. He prepared men for receiving a spiritual religion, by enforcing the necessity of repentance and holiness. Both John the Baptist and himself had dwelt upon the terrors of a future judgment, and had said plainly, that the children of the kingdom, that is, the natural descendants of Abraham, might finally be cast out. This was a hateful doctrine to men who placed the whole of their religion in outward forms, who were looked up to by the people as patterns of sanctity; and who now heard that publicans and harlots might enter into heaven before them. This will, perhaps, says Dr. E. Burton, be found a sufficient clue to the whole conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees. It might seem strange, that they should punish the teacher of this new doctrine with death; but it is only strange, if we view the matter according to modern notions.

In the times to which we refer, and particularly in Judea, the shedding of blood was an ordinary circumstance; and the pages of ecclesiastical history will prove to us, sadly too often, that he who silences an adversary by death, persuades himself that he is benefiting the cause of truth.

We are told expressly, that the Apostles delivered their doctrine daily in the temple. It was there they worked their miracles in the light of day; and that thousands were converted, is a fact which could not be disputed. The Council which had sat in assize upon "the Holy and Just One," and whom they crucified, could not behold with indifference, that the measure, which they had vainly imagined so successful, was likely to be of no avail. Jesus Christ was not an object of envy to the Roman government. The Procurator sacrificed him to preserve his own character for loyalty to the Emperor; and had he continued at Jerusalem, it is probable that the Jews might have prejudiced him against the Galilæans. When the Apostles took up the cause of the Redeemer, whose religion was expected to have been extinguished at his death, they revived among the people the same generous and liberal feelings which had been shown to their crucified Master. The miracles which they wrought, independent of the beneficence of their character, and the real good which resulted from them, could not fail to raise the workers of them in the eyes of the people. The Chief Priests were aware of this, and took their measures against the Apostles with extreme caution. On one occasion we read of their taking them into custody, but "without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned." (Acts v. 26.) More than once the Apostles were imprisoned, and corporeal punishment was inflicted upon them; but each of these attempts rather showed the timidity of their opponents, and strengthened the cause which they were intended to depress. To say nothing at present of the Apostles being released from prison by a miracle, they declared openly in the Council, that they intended to proceed; and the moment of their dismissal saw them once more preaching in the temple, and multitudes crowding to hear them.*

The High Priest Annas,† who had always been the determined enemy of Christ, belonging to the Sadducean party, was easily led to employ all his authority against the Apostles. The Evangelist Luke

* Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist. Lect. II. Oxford, 1831.

† The High Priest at this time was properly Caiaphas, who had been appointed in the year 26, according to some chronologists; but his father-in-law, Annas, or Ananus, who had himself filled the office for fifteen years, and had influence enough to obtain it successively for five of his sons, appears still to have retained the power in his own hands; and Luke, who wrote several years after, mentions Caiaphas, by the name which he seems to have held during life, namely, that of Annas the High Priest. Two other persons are named by Luke, who have thus received the distinction of being handed down among the earliest opponents of the Gospel. These were John and Alexander; and though it is unsafe to rest upon a mere identity of names, it has been supposed that both of them were persons of celebrity; that the former, who is here called John, was the Rabbi Jochanan ben Zacai, the first President of the Sanhedrim, after the destruction of Jerusalem; (Biscoe, p. 72; Lightfoot, vol. i., p. 2009;) and that Alexander was the brother of Philo-Judæus, who held the office of Alabarch of the Jews in Alexandria. It would seem that all these persons were Sadducees, and particularly active in endeavouring to silence the Apostles. (Dr. Edward Burton.)

seems to imagine that party feeling exerted great influence in the proceedings of the Jews against Christianity. He twice speaks of the High Priest and his party being Sadducees; and though there is evidence, that the Pharisees were equally, if not more, enraged against our Lord, for the cutting severity of his reproofs, they were likely to be at utter variance with the Sadducees, when the point of doctrine was considered. The Pharisees, though they were overjoyed to see the Apostles punished, did not wish to see the Sadducees taking the lead, nor to have the doctrine of Jesus condemned by them, because it supported a resurrection; and there is reason to suspect that this division of sentiment in the Sanhedrim operated for a season in favour of the Apostles. The High Priest was provoked beyond endurance at their steady and unflinching contempt of the repeated injunctions of the Synod, whose president and agent he was, and rose up in all his anger and power, and seized the Apostles, whom he put into the common jail, as disturbers of the peace of the city, and of the religious order of the temple. This imprisonment was intended to be merely temporary, and was to last only until a convenient time should be found for bringing them to trial, when the crowd of strangers had retired from the city, and the excitement which had been raised from the preaching and miracles of the Apostles had subsided, that the ordinary course of law might be practically observed, and the Apostles be brought to the same fate as their Master. Their scheme, however, was baffled. During the night, the prison-doors were opened by "the angel of the Lord," by whom the Apostles were brought out of confinement, and directed to "go, stand and speak in the temple all the words of this life." According to this divine command, they went to the temple early in the morning, doubtless, before their tyrants had left their lazy pillows. In the course of the forenoon, the Council was called, and the imprisoned offenders were ordered to be produced; but what was their surprise and perplexity when the officers informed them that their cells were empty; and yet, the doors locked, and the sentinels before them, unconscious of the escape of the prisoners! "Now, when the High Priest, and the Captain of the temple, and the Chief Priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow." (Acts v. 24.) These dignitaries were not long left in perplexity. Some sycophant, whose name is properly buried in oblivion, said, "Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people." (Acts v. 25.) Upon this information, a detachment of officers was sent to bring these delinquents before them. But as it appeared that the criminals were now in the midst of a vast assemblage of their friends, who were too firmly devoted to them and their cause to suffer them to receive any violence, it was agreed to manage the affair as peaceably and with as little outward show as possible. In this they were aided by the Apostles, who manifested no unwillingness to appear before their persecutors. When they were placed before the Council, the High Priest, turning his lately-perplexed countenance into a look of austere dignity, inquired, "Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this

name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." (Acts v. 28.) Peter, at the head of his colleagues, boldly answered, that they should obey God rather than man, and proceeded fearlessly to preach Jesus as the Saviour, the author of repentance and forgiveness unto Israel. So enraged was the Council at this, that it was proceeding to put them to death, when Gamaliel advised gentler measures. And at his suggestion, having first beaten them,* they let the Apostles go, reiterating their charge not to speak in the name of Jesus.

The Sanhedrim was not wholly composed of men who were of the Sadducean party. Gamaliel was a Pharisee, and was held in high estimation among the Jews.† He has been said, upon authority which is entitled to some weight, to have been the son of Simeon, who took the infant Jesus in his arms when he was presented in the temple. By his mother's side, he was of the seed of David; and was grandson of Hillel, who was one of the most learned Jewish Doctors of his day. He himself died eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem, having held the office of President of the Sanhedrim for several years, in which he was succeeded by his descendants for ten generations. The advice which he gave concerning the Apostles (Acts v. 38, 39) was doubtless sincere and salutary; but it may be questioned whether Gamaliel and his party were not more unwilling to give the Sadducees a triumph by punishing men who maintained the doctrine of a resurrection; and thus God, who holds all agencies in his hands, and can direct and control them as he sees fit, watched over the infant church, and made the divisions in the assemblies of

* "Having first beaten them."—A scourge was a kind of whip, composed either of cords, leather thongs, or wands. The Jews were prohibited giving more than forty stripes at once; but if the crime were reckoned great, the lashes were more severe. (Deut. xxv. 1—3; 2 Cor. xi. 24.) The Rabbins assert, that all crimes, the punishment of which is not specified, incurred scourging, and that it was not reckoned disgraceful. Philo the Jew represents it as no less insupportable to a free-man than death. The persons scourged were stripped, were tied by the hands to a low pillar, and they received the lashes on the bended back. Supposed criminals were sometimes scourged, to oblige them to confess their crimes. (Acts xxii. 24.) Pilate scourged Jesus, in order that he might please the Jews and prevail upon them to withdraw the punishment of crucifixion. (John xix. 1, 4, 6.)

† There are idle traditions about his having been converted to Christianity by Peter and John; (Phot. Cod., clxxi., p. 199;) but they are altogether irreconcilable with the esteem and respect in which he was held even in later times by the Jewish Rabbins, by whom his opinions are frequently quoted as an all-silencing authority on points of religious law. Neither does his interference in behalf of the Apostles at all show, as some would have it, that he secretly approved their doctrines. He was a dispassionate judge, and reasoned in that affair with the tact of worldly wisdom and experience, urging that religious opinions usually gain strength by opposition and persecution, while, if not noticed at all, they are sure not to leave any impression on the minds of the people, if devoid of truth; and that it is in vain to contend against them if true. That he was more enlightened and tolerant than his colleagues and contemporaries, is evident from the very fact, that he allowed his zealous pupil, Saul, to turn his mind to Greek literature, which, in a great measure, qualified him afterwards to become *the* Apostle of the Gentiles; while, by the Jewish-Palestine laws, after the Maccabæan wars, even the Greek language was prohibited to be taught to the Hebrew youth. Another proof of the high respect in which Gamaliel stood with the Jews long after his death, is afforded by an anecdote told in the Talmud respecting his tomb, to the effect that Onkelos (the celebrated Chaldean translator of the Old Testament) spent seventy pounds of incense at his grave in honour of his memory. (Kitto.)

her adversaries contribute to its prosperity and peace. Some writers have ventured to assert that Gamaliel was in heart a Christian, and that after this period he openly avowed himself. Such a notion appears perfectly unfounded.

Persecution now became severe. The church had hitherto been tossed with gentle breezes, it was now overtaken by a more violent tempest, by which the disciples were dispersed, and enabled to scatter the good seed of the kingdom wherever they went. The Most High, who frequently brings good out of evil, provided in this way that the Gospel should not be confined to Jerusalem, pent up within the city walls, but propagated among the neighbouring provinces, according to an ancient prediction, "Out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isai. ii. 3.) Among the multitude of Stephen's murderers and disputants, there was one only whose name has been preserved from the sepulchral oblivion which hides their infamy. That man has been known to millions, as a bright leader of the ransomed host, and a faithful confessor, who sealed with his blood the testimony which the proto-martyr bore beneath the murderous missiles which destroyed his life. In the synagogue of the Cilicians, which was so active in the attack on Stephen, was a young man who was not behind the fiercest of the sanguinary bigots, in the steady and unrelenting hate which he displayed towards the heresy of the Christian name. He gave his voice amid the clamours of the mob, to swell the cry for the death of the heretic; and when the stout murderers hurled the stones at the martyr's head, he took charge of the loose garments which they had thrown off, that they might use their limbs with the greater freedom. Neither the sight of the martyr kneeling unresistingly to meet his bloody death, nor the sound of his voice, rising in the broken tones of his death-struggle in prayer for his murderers, could mitigate the deep and rancorous hatred of Saul of Tarsus. Raging against the faithful companions of the martyred Stephen, he, with most inquisitorial zeal, sought them out, even in the privacies of domestic life, and, violating the sanctity of home, dragged out the inmates, without any regard to delicacy or decency, and immured them in the public dungeons. As the storm continued to expend its fury on the new converts to Christianity, those who were more apprehensive of assault sought safety in flight, according to the injunction of the Lord, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another." (Matt. x. 23.) Still the word of God prevailed, and the church grew.

Among these fugitives was Philip the Deacon. That divine Providence which governs the world, and more particularly superintends the affairs and interests of the church, so that no weapon formed against her might prosper, directed the steps of this messenger of mercy to Samaria, where he preached the Gospel, and confirmed the truth by dispossessing devils, and healing those who were diseased; and "the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake." (Acts viii. 6.) The Apostles, who yet remained at Jerusalem, hearing of the great success of the word in Samaria, thought good to send Peter and John thither, where they prayed with, and

laid their hands upon, the new converts, who forthwith received the Holy Ghost. It was at this time that Peter's acquaintance with Simon the magician began. This man, by some tricks of *legerdemain*, had so imposed upon the inhabitants of Samaria, that they were impressed with the notion that he was some great one; * individuals, both young and old, treated him with the greatest reverence, on account of the consummate ability which he displayed in the arts of sorcery; and so degraded were their views of miraculous agency, that they actually concluded the performances which he exhibited were marks of divine interposition in his favour, and that he himself was a personification of the mighty power of God. The presence of Peter and John could not fail to produce a still stronger, and far more just, impression of preternatural power. Though Philip was enabled to work miracles himself, he was not able to communicate that gift to others. The baptism which the Deacon administered, conferred the ordinary sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, but not any of the visible and extraordinary gifts.† It appears from many passages of the New Testament that the power of communicating these gifts was possessed exclusively by the Apostles. This was the effect of Peter and John merely laying their hands upon them and praying; and no stronger evidence could be borne to the reality of these miracles, than by the fact of Simon offering money that he might possess the power of conferring these miraculous powers. When the Apostle Peter beheld his intention, he rejected his impious proposition with indignation and scorn, saying, "Thy money perish with thee!" He told him that his heart was hypocritical and false; that he could not possibly share in such a privilege, and that he must repent of his atrocious wickedness, and apply to God, who alone could forgive the evil designs of his heart.‡ The conscience of Simon was so alarmed, that he entreated of the Apostles to intercede with the Almighty in his behalf, "that none of those things which they had spoken should come upon him." (Acts viii. 24.)

It is extremely difficult to separate truth from fiction in the history of Simon Magus; but the most authentic facts which we know of him being recorded by the historian Luke, and connected with the early propagation of the Gospel, it is impossible to pass them unnoticed, especially as some writers assert, that he had a considerable share in that persecution which shed the blood of the Apostle

* See Irenæi Opera, lib. i., cap. 20, fol., Oxon., 1702; Tertulliani Opera; Apologet. Adversus Gentes, cap. 46, 47, 8vo. edit., Wirceb., 1780.

† See a Sermon by the author, entitled, The Signs of an Apostle, and the Evidence for the Cessation of miraculous Powers in the Church, considered. 8vo. Oxford, 1832.

‡ The words of Peter on this occasion, it is justly remarked by Neander, "present the doctrine of the Gospel, which so expressly intimates the absolute necessity of a right state of mind for the reception of all that Christianity conveys, in direct opposition to the Magianism, which denies all necessary connexion between the state of mind, and that which is divine and supernatural, brings down the divine and supernatural within the sphere of ordinary nature, and imagines that divine power may be appropriated by means of something else than that which is allied to it in man's nature, and which supplies the only point of union between the two." (Neander. Apost. Zeitalt., vol. i., p. 82.)

Peter. Dr. E. Burton, on the testimony of Justin Martyr,* informs us, that "Simon was a native of Gittum, a village in Samaria. Of his education," he continues, "we know nothing for certain; but in a work which, although spurious, is of considerable antiquity, it is said that he studied at Alexandria, and was well versed in Grecian literature, as well as being a proficient in oratory and dialectics." That he studied at Alexandria, is not improbable; and he would have learnt in that city, what he seems undoubtedly to have professed, the doctrine of the Gnostics.† The name of "Gnosticism" was, perhaps, not yet given to any particular sect of philosophers. But, as is generally the case in the progress of opinions, the thing existed, and had advanced a considerable way, before it assumed a distinctive name. Philosophy had long been verging toward an eclectic character in Alexandria. There had, in fact, never been an exclusive school predominant in that city; and though the Platonic philosophy was the most popular, it received some important modifications from two different quarters. The Jews had been settled in considerable numbers in Alexandria from the foundation of the city. Their language soon became Greek, and many of them had an extensive acquaintance with heathen literature. This produced an important effect upon the philosophy of one party, and the religion of the other. The Platonists studied the Jewish Scriptures, and saw in them traces of a pure and sublime theology. The Jews, who endeavoured to remove the prejudices against their peculiar creed, tried, in an evil hour, to show that it harmonized with many of the speculations of Plato. They even asserted that Plato had borrowed from the writings of Moses; a statement which, if destitute of any just foundation, was implicitly believed by many of the Fathers.‡ The Platonists

* Just. Mart. Apol. i., cap. 26.

† Gnostics were ancient heretics, famous from the first rise of Christianity, principally in the East. It appears from several passages of Scripture, particularly 1 John ii. 18; 1 Tim. vi. 20; Col. ii. 8, that many persons were infected with that heresy in the first century, though the sect did not render itself conspicuous, either for numbers or reputation, before the time of Adrian, when some writers erroneously date its rise. The name was adopted by this sect, on the presumption that they were the only persons who had the true knowledge of Christianity; accordingly, they looked on all other Christians as simple, ignorant, and barbarous persons, who explained and interpreted the sacred writings in a low, literal, and unedifying signification. At first, the Gnostics were the only philosophers of those times, who formed for themselves a peculiar system of theology, agreeable to the philosophy of Pythagoras and Plato; to which they accommodated all their interpretations of Scripture. But afterwards the Gnostics became a generic name, comprehending divers sects and parties of heretics who rose in the first centuries; and who, though they differed among themselves as to circumstances, all agreed in some common principle. They corrupted the doctrine of the Gospel by a profane mixture of the tenets of the oriental philosophy, concerning the origin of evil, and the creation of the world, with its divine truths. Such were the Valentinians, Simonians, Carpocratians, Nicolaitans, &c. (Henderson's Theol. Dict.)

‡ "Quotations might be given from almost all the Fathers, which would show their firm belief that Plato was indebted to Moses for many of his opinions; but since any index to the works of these writers will point out the passages, I shall only state generally that nearly all the Christian writers, from Justin Martyr downwards, supposed Plato not only to have agreed with Moses by a coincidence of thought, but to have actually profited by the Jewish writings. Nor was this notion peculiar to the Christian Fathers. Hermippus is quoted by Origen as saying that Pythagoras introduced his philosophy into Greece from Judea; and Philo Judæus speaks of Zeno having borrowed one of his notions from the Jewish law. Josephus appears to assert the same of

met this charge by referring to writings much older than the time of Plato, and, as they contended, prior also to Moses. "This was, I believe," says Dr. Burton, "the origin of many of the forgeries which, under the names of Orpheus, Musæus, and other poets of the heroic ages, may be traced to Alexandria as their source." The intercourse with the Jews will also account for many expressions in the spurious oracles which were ascribed to the Sibyls and the Magi, and which were probably written with a view to conciliate the creeds of Moses and Plato. The Alexandrian Jews were not only the corrupters of their religion from heathen sources, but their doctrines, as they explained them to the Grecian philosophers, were already debased with a considerable alloy from Babylon and Persia. The conquests of Alexander, and the communication between Egypt and the East which flowed from them, were another means of introducing the Persian doctrines into Alexandria; and thus, from these three sources, the philosophy of Plato, the religion of Moses, and the theology of the Magi,* a new and heterogeneous system sprang up, which led to the ill-digested, but, in some degree, not irrational, eclectic philosophy on the one hand, and to the ravings of Gnosticism on the other.†

Hence the false doctrine with which Peter had to contend. "These heretics taught that matter was independent of the Deity, and co-eternal with him. This was a fundamental doctrine of Platonism. They believed that several orders of spiritual beings were interposed

Plato; and Aristobulus, another countryman of Philo, is quoted by Clement of Alexandria, as saying that Plato copied the Jewish law, and that Pythagoras took many of his doctrines from the same quarter. Numerius, who was a Platonist of the second century, went so far as to say, 'What is Plato, but Moses Atticising?' When we find Jewish and heathen writers expressing themselves in this manner, we must not be too severe upon the Fathers who have held the same opinion. Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, and Augustine have perhaps gone the greatest lengths in tracing the resemblance between Plato and Moses; and the reader will find much information upon this subject in Brucker. (Vol. iii., p. 332.) It is probable that the Jewish writers, such as Philo and Aristobulus, who had already used the same arguments, had been endeavouring to remove a similar prejudice which existed against the Jewish religion; and the latter Platonists, not being able to deny the greater antiquity of the books of Moses, allowed that there was an agreement between the Legislator and Plato. But there is reason also to think, that they wished to refer both the Jewish and the Grecian philosophy to a common origin in Egypt, or in the East." (Burton's Bampton Lectures, p. 531. Oxford, 1829.)

* Simon's doctrines were substantially those of the Gnostics, and he is not without reason regarded as the first who attempted to engraft the theurgy and egotism of the Magian philosophy upon Christianity. He represented himself, according to Jerome, as the Word of God, the Perfection, the Paraclete, the Almighty, the All of Deity; "*Multi enim venient in nomine meo, dicentes*, &c. Quorum unus est Simon Samaritanus, quem in Actibus Apostolorum legimus; qui si magnam dicebat esse Dei virtutem, hæc quoque inter cætera in suis voluminibus, scripta dimittens: Ego sum verbum Dei, ego sum Speciosus, ego Paracletus, ego Omnipotens, ego Omnia Dei." (Hieron. Opera, tom. iv., p. 114. Fol. edit. Benedict. Paris, 1706.) Irenæus tells us, he carried with him a beautiful female, named Helena, whom he set forth as the first idea of Deity. "Hic Helenam quandam, quam ipse à Tyro civitate Phœnices quæstuariam cum redemisset, secum circumducebat, dicens hanc esse primam mentis ejus conceptionem, matrem omnium, per quam in initio mente concepit angelos facere et archangelos." (Irenæi Opera, Adv. Gentes, lib. i., cap. 20. Fol. Oxon., 1702.) If this be not exaggerated fable on the part of his enemies, we must suppose that such modes of speech and representation were adopted by him, as suited to the highly allegorical character of Orientalism in his day; for if we suppose him to have meant such utterances to be taken literally, we should be constrained to look upon him in the light of a madman.

† Burton's Lectures on the Ecclesiastical History of the First Century.

between God and the human race, and that the demons of the one being were identified with the angels of the other. The Jews also admitted many innovations in their belief concerning angels, from Babylon. The oriental notion was, that several successive emanations of spiritual beings had proceeded from God; and the theory of emanations became the favourite notion of the Gnostics, and their grand invention for accounting for the origin of evil. They supposed the Deity, by acting upon his own mind, to have produced the first pair of beings, whom they called Æons; and these, by succeeding emanations, gave birth to other beings, who gradually deteriorated, and had less resemblance to the great First Cause. One of these later emanations passed the boundaries of the Pleroma, which was the abode of the Deity, and these coming in contact with matter created the world. According to this scheme, the First Cause had nothing to do with creation, nor was even aware of its having taken place. The evil which appeared in the world was inherent in matter itself; and the Deity was constantly employed in attempting to remedy it. Such, as far as we can penetrate this obscure subject, was the state of one branch of philosophy which Simon Magus would meet with, if he studied in the schools of Alexandria. We can trace another connexion with that system, in the pretensions which he made to supernatural power; and the Gnostics have always been represented as dealing in magic." That Simon *appeared* at least to work miracles, cannot be doubted. He had attracted attention in Samaria some time before Philip arrived there; and all the people looked up to him as an extraordinary character. There is some evidence that Simon was not the first person who introduced these notions into that country. Dositheus * is mentioned as having preceded him. Whether this were the case or not, Simon "gave out that himself was some great one:" (Acts viii. 9:) soon after he had established this character, Philip the Deacon appeared in the same town, working much more stupendous miracles, and announcing a Teacher sent from God, who would free mankind from the tyranny of sin. The delivery of such a doctrine at this time was critical, and could not fail to make a great impression upon the mind of Simon. Though he was an impostor as to his miracles, he may have been sincere in his philosophy; and Philip certainly appeared to realize the expectations which Simon had been teaching the whole Samaritan nation to entertain. The reality and overwhelming character of Philip's miracles are, in fact, greatly confirmed by what took place in Samaria; and the baptism of Simon was a remarkable instance of the testimony which error pays to truth.†

The state of the Christians in the scattered towns and villages of Judea and Samaria must have proved a source of constant anxiety to the Apostles. They would be in danger everywhere from the bigoted adherents of the law; and in Samaria in particular, there was great fear of their corrupting the Gospel by the false philosophy which had

* See Burton's Bampton Lectures, lect. iv., note xl., p. 369, Oxford, 1829; and Milman's History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 96, *et seq.*

† Burton's Ecclesiastical History, p. 77, *et seq.*

been preached by Simon Magus. To save them from these perils, and to keep them firm in the true faith, the Apostles appear to have been in the habit of making short journeys from Jerusalem to visit them. Luke only mentions two or three such visits of Peter; but it appears probable, that all the Apostles were engaged in the same labour, and although the care of the churches was divided among twelve, yet the critical state of them might warrant the observation, that "the harvest truly was plenteous, but the labourers were few." It was about the end of Caligula's reign, when Peter, having terminated his visitation of the churches, returned to Jerusalem. Not long after, Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, attained the kingdom. He united in his person the claims of the Herodian and the Asmonean lines, with the blood of the heroic Maccabees; he was crowned by the imperial Lord of the civilized world, whose boundless power was pledged in his support by the obligations of an intimate personal friendship; he was received with joy and hope by the subjects of his now consolidated empire, and there seemed nothing wanting to complete the auspices of a glorious reign. In the midst of great outward splendour and kingly magnificence, the attention of the Monarch was directed to a few despised individuals, who were wandering like outcasts from place to place, and seeking supporters only among the unintellectual mass of the community, who were represented to him as evil-disposed to his government, and dangerous to the prosperity and safety of the religion of the country, by the decided voice of censure from the devout and learned guardians of the purity of the law of God, who invoked the aid of his sovereign power to check, and, if possible, uproot, this heresy, which the unseasonable tolerance of the Roman Government had too long shielded from the righteous visitations of judicial vengeance. Agrippa manifested no disposition to refuse to gratify the reverend defenders of the Jewish faith and practice; and therefore, reckless of all consequences, he unhesitatingly stretched out his arm in vindictive cruelty over the church, and singled out the first person whom momentary circumstances might render most prominent or obnoxious to censure: he at once doomed to a bloody death the elder son of Zebedee, the second of the great apostolic three. No sooner was this sentence executed, than, steady in the prosecution of his sanguinary scheme so grateful to the Jews, he followed the step by seizing upon Peter, the active and successful leader of the heretical company. This occurred during the holy week of the passover; and such was the tyrant's profound regard for all things connected with the national religion, that he would not violate the sanctity of the sacred festival by the execution of a criminal, however deserving of that fate he might be. The execution of Peter was delayed, and accordingly he was committed to prison, probably to the tower of Antonia;* and, in

* For an account of this tower or castle, we refer to the graphic description which Josephus has given respecting it. (Jewish Wars, lib. v., cap. v., sect. 8.) There has been much speculation as to the place where Peter was confined. The sacred text (Acts xii. 10) makes it plain that it was without the city itself, since after leaving the prison it was still necessary to enter the city by "the iron gate." Walch, Kuinoel, and Bloomfield adopt the view that it was in one of the towers or castles that fortified

order to prevent all possibility of escape, he was confined under the charge of sixteen Roman soldiers, divided into four companies, of four men in each, who were to keep him under constant supervision day and night, according to the established principles of the Roman military discipline, with the perfect understanding, that if, on the conclusion of the passover, the prisoner were not forthcoming, the guards should answer for the failure with their lives. Having thus provided for the safety of Peter, the King, with his gratified friends in the Sanhedrim, and the rabble without, gave themselves up to the enjoyment of the feast, which was in no small degree increased by the prospect of destroying the Christian faith.

In the mean time the church passed through this anniversary with mournful reminiscences, and painful anticipations. In by-gone years, with unutterable agony and despair, they had parted, as they supposed, for ever with their Lord; and now, after years of devotion to his work, they were called to renew these sorrows in the untimely death of one who had led them forward, through toil and peril, with a holy spirit, and an undaunted zeal: "but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." (Acts xii. 5.) At length the solemn passover-rites of the last great day of the feast were over; the sacrifice, the incense, and the song, rose no more from the sanctuary; and all the vast extent of the temple was hushed in a silence deep as the ruinous oblivion to which the voice of their God had doomed them shortly to pass. In the castle of Antonia, the garrison had set their nightly watch, each warrior slumbered in his turn, till the round of duty should summon him to relieve guard. The quaternion on duty was divided into two portions; each half being so disposed and posted as to effect the most complete supervision of which the place was capable; two men keeping watch outside of the well-bolted door of the cell, and two within, who, not limited to the charge of keeping their eyes on the prisoner, had him fastened to their persons by a chain on each side. In this proximity to his hardy companions, Peter was accustomed to pass the night. In the day time he was freed from one of these chains, and remained attached only to one of the guard. This was an arrangement in perfect accordance with the mode of securing important state-prisoners among the Romans. Peter slept. The close and feverish confinement of a noisome cell could not hinder the placid enjoyment of repose; nor could the certainty of a cruel and shameful death move

the walls. Wolf and others object to the view, that it was without the walls; because, as Wolf says, it was not customary to have public prisons outside of the city, since the prisoners might in that case be sometimes rescued by a bold assault from some hardy band of comrades, &c. But this objection is worth nothing against the castle Antonia, which, though it stood entirely separated from the rest of the city, was exceedingly strong, and by its position, as well as fortification, impregnable to any common force; a circumstance which would at once suggest and recommend it, as a secure place for one who, like Peter, had previously escaped from the common prison. There was always a Roman garrison in Antonia. Baronius suggests the castle of Antonia as the most probable place of Peter's confinement. "Juxta templum fortasse in ea munitissima turri quæ dicebatur Antonia." (Eccles. Annales, A.D. 44, sect. 5.) This was the place to which Paul was carried to be imprisoned, when he fell into the hands of the corps of soldiers which constituted the guard at that time. (Acts xxi. 34, 37; xxii. 24.)

his noble spirit from its self-possession. From him, however, in whom he trusted, came a messenger of deliverance; and from the depths of a danger the most appalling and threatening, he was soon brought to serve his Master, through several faithful years, feeding the flock till, in his old age, "another should gird him, and carry him whither he would not." He who had prayed for him in the revelation of his peculiar glories on Mount Hermon, and had so highly consecrated him to the great cause, had yet greater things for him to do; and to new works and wonders he now called him from the castle-prison of the royal persecutor.*

The night before his intended execution, God purposely sent an angel from heaven, who, coming to the prison, found him fast asleep between two of his keepers: so soft and secure a pillow, says Dr. Cave, is a good conscience, even in the confines of death, and in the greatest danger. The overwhelmed and still half-slumbering captive was raised from the ground by the power of the mysterious visitant, and, after deliberately resuming his garments, was led out of the prison, freed from his fetters, over the bodies of his unconscious guards, and having passed the first and second watch, they entered through the iron gate into the city. But here the difficulties were not over. During the great feast-days, when large assemblies of people were gathered at Jerusalem from various quarters, to guard against riots and insurrection, the armed Roman force, as Josephus relates, was doubled and tripled, occupying several new posts around the temple; and, as the same historian particularly mentions, on the approaches of Castle Antonia, where its foundations descended towards the terraces of the temple, and formed a passage to the great eastern colonnades. On all these places the guard must have been under arms during this passover; and even at night the sentries would be stationed at all the important posts, as a reasonable security against the numerous strangers of dubious character who now thronged the metropolis. Entering the city, he followed the footsteps of his guide till they had proceeded through the first street, when, all at once, his deliverer vanished, leaving Peter alone in the silent city, but free and safe. "And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hands of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews." (Acts xii. 11.) He immediately proceeded to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where the disciples were accustomed to assemble. Approaching the door, he knocked; and after some delay, arising from the overjoyed incredulity of the damsel Rhoda, and of the brethren who were watching in prayer, the door of the friendly mansion was opened to the liberated Apostle, who was received with prayerful congratulation and joy. Peter having briefly related the manner of his extraordinary deliverance, and charging them to acquaint the brethren with it, he departed to another place. We need scarcely stay to observe, that on the devoted minions of the baffled King did the rage of his disappointment fall. They all suffered an undeserved and ignominious death.

* Bacon's Lives of the Apostles, p. 219, &c.

Thus far, we have had an infallible and divine guide to lead and instruct us respecting the persecutions of Peter: we have now to depend upon the uncertain and contradictory assertions of ancient writers. Passing by his visit to Antioch, we may observe, in answer to the question, What became of Peter after his deliverance from prison? that it is unknown: probably he might preach in some more distant parts of Judea, and in the neighbouring countries. After this, it is said, he made a journey to Rome,* and that he arrived about the second year of the reign of Claudius, where he was instrumental in planting Christianity; and now it was, says Baronius,† that Peter, being mindful of the churches which he had planted in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Bithynia, and Asia the Less, wrote his first Epistle to them, which he, probably, infers from the idea, that Mark being yet with him at the time of the date of this Epistle, it must have been written some time that year, for that now it was that Mark was sent to preach and propagate the faith in Egypt. Next to the planting religion at Rome, proceeds the Annalist, he took care to propagate it in foreign parts. It has also been stated, that after Peter had been several years at Rome, Claudius, the Emperor, taking advantage of some seditions and tumults raised by the Jews, by a public edict banished them from the metropolis. Peter, who by these historians is supposed to have been among the number, departed thence to Jerusalem, and was present at that great apostolical synod held to decide the question concerning the observance of the Mosaic rites and ceremonies. Romish disputants are very fond of treating the points as settled, namely, that Peter introduced the Gospel in Rome, of which church he was the Bishop for a period of not less than twenty-five years; and that he bequeathed his full supremacy, whatever it might be, to his successors in that chair.‡ But so far from such being the

* The following are a few of the ancient writers who have advocated this hypothesis:—Irenæus, Dionysius Bishop of Corinth, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian of Carthage, Lactantius, and Jerome. In the latter part of the first century, Clement, Bishop of Rome, (Epist. ad Cor.,) speaks of Peter and Paul as persecuted, and as having become martyrs; but he does not say when or where. In the middle of the second century, Justin Martyr speaks of Simon Magus, his magic, and his deification at Rome, but makes no mention of Peter's going to Rome to combat him. See my edition of Dr. Elliott's Delineation of Roman Catholicism, pp. 497, 630, *et seq.* London, 1844.

† Baronii Eccles. Annales, A.D. 45, sect. 16.

‡ The Papists, not appreciating any difficulty in the matter, go on crowding one absurdity upon another, which claims the additional merit of being amusing in its folly. We allude to the minute particularization of the shape, stuff, and accoutrements of the chair in which Peter sat at Rome in his episcopal character. This identical wooden chair in which he was seated, when exercising the functions of his bishopric, is still, according to high Papal authorities, preserved in the Basilica of St. Peter's at Rome; and is even now, on certain high occasions, brought out, to bless with its presence the eyes of an adoring people. This chair is kept covered with a linen veil, among the various treasures of the Vatican, and has been eminent for the vast numbers of great miracles which have been wrought by its efficacy. "The Papists had," says Archibald Bower, "as they thought, till the year 1662, a pregnant proof, not only of St. Peter erecting their chair, but of sitting in it himself: for till that year, the very chair, on which they believed, or would make others believe, he had sat, was shown and exposed to public adoration on the 18th of January, the festival of the said chair. But while it was cleaning, in order to be set up in some conspicuous place of the Vatican, the twelve labours of Hercules unluckily appeared engraven on it. 'Our worship, however,' says Giacomo Bartolini, who was present at this discovery, and relates it, 'was not misplaced, since it was not to the wood we paid it, but to the Prince of the Apostles,

case, long and learned arguments have been constructed to show, that the greater probability is, that Peter was never in Rome at all!* We do not wish, however, to urge a point which cannot now be positively decided, and which concerns all parties very little. We are willing to admit, from the general tenor of those fragments of the history of the early Christian church which are extant among us, that it was most generally believed, in the second and third centuries, that Peter, as well as Paul, visited Rome towards the end of his life, and had been martyred there. It is beyond the object and limits of our work to enter further on this subject, especially when we have considered the question fully elsewhere.†

The solemn words in which the Apostle refers, at the commencement of his last Epistle, to the nearness of his own death, will doubtless be brought to our minds, when we approach the termination of his earthly career. "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me," (2 Peter i. 14,) seems to imply a prophetic intimation, that he anticipated his decease speedily following the writing of that Epistle. With the exception of this passage, and another which records the language of our Saviour, in which it is signified by what death Peter "should glorify God;" (John xxi. 18, 19;) the writings of the New Testament are entirely silent with regard to his last days. Towards the latter part of Nero's reign, Peter is supposed to have returned to Rome: if so, it was probably to comfort and encourage the Christian community, who were suffering under unheard of and bitter persecutions. A trembling remnant stealthily met in the name of their crucified Master, expecting every time to be offered after his example. The word of God was hindered indeed. It could be preached but in caves underneath the earth, in cellars, and in catacombs. The name of Christian was a death-warrant; the life was in jeopardy every hour; every hour through which a believer survived, was one redeemed from expected death; men died daily. In the midst of this outward calamity, Peter would be grieved at witnessing the awful apostacy which had thinned the ranks of the faithful, chiefly induced by the arts and subtleties of Simon Magus, who had strangely bewitched the minds of the people, and hardened them against embracing, or holding fast, the truths of the Gospel. With

St. Peter.' An author, of no mean character, unwilling to give up the holy chair, even after this discovery, as having a place, and a peculiar solemnity among the other saints, has attempted to explain the labours of Hercules in a mystical sense, as emblems representing the future exploits of the Popes. (Luchesini catedra restituita a S. Pietro.) But the ridiculous and distorted conceits of that writer are not worthy our notice, although, by Clement X., they were judged not unworthy a reward." (Bower's Lives of the Popes, vol. i., p. 7, quarto. London, 1750.)

* In the Acts of the Apostles, no mention is made of Peter after the Council of Jerusalem. But from Gal. ii. 11, it appears that after that Council, he was with Paul at Antioch. He is likewise mentioned by the latter, 1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 22: it is generally supposed, that after Peter was at Antioch with Paul, he returned to Jerusalem. What happened to him after that time, is not recorded in the Scriptures. Eusebius informs us, that Origen wrote to this effect: Peter is supposed to have preached the Gospel to the Jews of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia.

† Elliott's Delineation of Roman Catholicism, p. 630, *et seq.* 8vo. London, 1844.

him Peter thought fit to encounter,* and endeavoured to undeceive the people by discovering the impostures and delusions of that arch-heretic, notwithstanding he was in high repute, both with the people and the Emperor, who was avowedly the great patron of magicians. That he did so, is affirmed by many of the Fathers,† who relate some particular instances in which he baffled and confounded his adversary. The following which we relate is drawn up evidently by Hegesippus, the younger, whom we quote: he was contemporary with Ambrose. Dr. Burton says, "The story has been embellished by so many marvellous circumstances, that some critics have rejected it altogether;" but, after having given the subject the most mature consideration, he cannot help concluding that this would be to carry our scepticism too far.‡ "There was at this time at Rome an eminent young person, and a kinsman of the Emperor, lately dead. The fame which Peter had obtained for raising individuals to life, persuaded his friends that he might be called; others also prevailing that Simon the magician might be sent for. Simon, glad of the occasion to magnify himself before the people, proposed to Peter, that if he raised the deceased from the dead, then Peter, who had so injuriously provoked 'the great power of God,' as he called himself, should lose his life; but if Peter prevailed, he would himself submit to the same sentence and fate. Peter accepted the terms, and Simon began his charms and incantations, on which the dead man appeared to move his hand. The people that stood by presently cried out, that he was alive, and that he talked with Simon, and began to fall foul upon Peter, for daring to oppose himself against so great a power. The Apostle entreated their patience; told them that all this was but a phantasm and appearance, and that if Simon was but taken from the bed-side, all this pageantry would quickly vanish. Simon was according removed, and the body remained without the least sign of motion. Peter, standing at a good distance from the bed, silently made his address to heaven, and then, before them all, commanded the young man, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to arise, who immediately did so, spoke, walked, and ate, and by the Apostle was restored to his mother. The people who witnessed this, immediately changed their opinions, and fell upon the magician with an intent to stone him. Peter interceded for his life, and told them, that it would be a sufficient punishment to him to live and see, in despite of all his power and malice, the kingdom of Christ flourish and increase."

"That Simon Magus pretended to work miracles, is stated, not only by the Fathers, but by Luke; (Acts viii. 9;) and when we read of his challenging Peter to a trial of their powers, and of his attempting to fly through the air, I cannot see," says Dr. Burton, "that the story is at all at variance with what we know of this impostor, and of the times in which he lived. It is singular that

* Eusebius, Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 14.

† Damasc. in Vit. Petr. Conc., vol. i.; Const. Apost., lib. vi., cap. 8, 9; Arnob. Adv. Gent., lib. ii., p. 23; Epiphan. Hæres, lib. xxi., cap. 1; Sulpitii Severi Opera, lib. ii., p. 137.

‡ Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. x., p. 294.

heathen writers* have preserved an account of a person attempting to fly in the reign of Nero, and being killed in the attempt; and though I would not," he says,† "connect this story with that of Simon Magus, it at least shows, that there is no improbability in supposing a person to have attempted to fly in the reign of Nero.‡ We are told that Simon Magus undertook such an exploit. Some, perhaps, will still think that the whole of this narration is to be rejected as a fable; but I cannot help repeating, that the outline of it is probably true; and that at some time or other Peter exposed a false miracle of Simon Magus at Rome, and was the cause of his death." § The account recorded is as follows:—

The impostor being inwardly disappointed and mortified at the former defeat, and vexed in witnessing the triumph of the Apostle, he screwed up all his innate impudence and audacity to the point, and told the people that he was offended at the Galilæans, having been to that people a protector and guardian; and, in order to vindicate his claims to supernatural powers, he appointed a day, on which he said, they should behold him fly up into heaven.‖ At the time appointed, he ascended the mount of the Capitol, and, throwing himself from the summit of the rock, began his flight. He is said to have made use of a fiery chariot for his perilous excursion. The attempt at first appeared as if it would succeed. It was a spectacle towards which the people looked with veneration and wonder, who affirmed that this must be the power of God, and not of man. Peter, standing in the crowd, prayed to our Lord, that the multitude might be undeceived, and that the vanity of Simon might be discovered in such a way, that he himself might be sensible of it. Immediately the wings which he had made began to fail, and the impostor fell to the ground: he broke both his legs; and, miserably wounded and bruised, he was borne to a neighbouring village, where he soon after died.¶ By some,

* Suetonius, Nero, sect. xii., p. 504, quarto; Dio. Chrys. Or. xxi., p. 371, edit. 1604; Juvenal. iii., 79.

† Burton's Lectures on Eccles. Hist., lect. x., p. 295.

‡ The case of Icarus will, doubtless, be familiar to many of our readers. He was the son of Dædalus, who, with his father, fled with wings, made with feathers and wax, and carefully fitted to the body. His flight, being too high, proved fatal to him, and the sun melted the wax which cemented his wings, and he fell into that part of the Ægean Sea which was called after his name. The flight of Dædalus from Crete, with wings, is explained by observing, that he was the inventor of sails, which in his age might pass at a distance for wings. (Ovid. Metam., viii., v. 178, &c.)

§ Burton's Bampton Lectures. Note 41, p. 371. Oxford, 1829.

‖ Some writers represent the challenge to have been given by the Apostle, others by the impostor. (Const. Apost., vi. 9.) The Constitutions were, probably, written in the fourth century. See Jortin, Discourse vi., on the Christian Religion, and Remarks on Eccles. Hist., vol. i., p. 148. 8vo. Edit. London, 1846. Lardner's Works, vol. iv., p. 576. Ittigius, de Pseudepigraphis, cap. xii., p. 190. Turner's Discourses on the pretended Apostolical Constitutions. Fabricius, Bibl. Gr., vol. v., p. 33, *cum aliis*.

¶ Arnobius, who did not write till the beginning of the fourth century, is the first person who says anything of Simon's death, at all approaching to this story; nor does he by any means give it with all the particulars which later writers have supplied. It will be observed, also, that Eusebius, who wrote after Arnobius, does not say anything of Simon's extraordinary end; but merely states, that his credit and influence were extinguished, as soon as Peter began to preach in Rome. It is probable, therefore, that no Greek writer, before the time of Eusebius, had mentioned this story; but, on the other hand, there is a host of evidence, that the death of Simon Magus was in some

it is stated, that he partially recovered from the effects of his fall, but, overcome by shame and vexation, he afterwards destroyed himself, by falling from the top of a house.*

Such was the fate of this miserable and unhappy man. The news of which no sooner came to the ears of Nero the Emperor, than it hastened the martyrdom of the Apostle. The tyrant, if the testimony of Ambrose is to be credited, had previously been displeased with Peter, not only upon the ground of general disagreement and non-conformity on the subject of religion, but because he had rigidly enforced upon all who heard him, the necessity of temperance and chastity; and had reclaimed so many in Rome from a dissolute and licentious course of life, that it actually checked that wanton libidinous disposition to which the Emperor was a slave and vassal. Being deprived of Simon Magus, his companion and favourite, in revenge, he commanded Peter to be apprehended, and cast into the Mamertine prison.† It has been conjectured, that Paul was imprisoned previous to the arrival of Peter; and it was, perhaps, not long before the latter shared the same fate. Tradition has assigned to both the Apostles the same miserable confinement in the Mamertine prisons; and some particulars are added, which partake too much of the marvellous, of their having converted the two jailors to embrace Christianity.‡ The fatal stroke was now daily expected. In the mean time, it is stated, that the Christians were importunate in soliciting Peter to make his escape, and thus reserve himself for the future exigencies of the church. On the first proposition, he rejected the scheme with disdain, as reflecting severely upon his courage and constancy; but at last the prayers and entreaties of the people led him to yield. Accordingly, the next night, having prayed with and taken farewell of the brethren, he scaled the prison-wall, and on arriving at the city gate, he is said to have met his Lord and Master.§ Peter said, "Lord, whither art thou going?" from whom he presently received this answer: "I am come to Rome, to be crucified a second time." By this reply, Peter apprehended himself reproved, that our Lord referred to his own death, and that he was again to be crucified in his servant. He immediately returned to the prison, delivered himself into the hands of the keepers, and manifested a cheerful readiness to acquiesce in the will of the Most High.‖ Before suffering, he was

way or other connected with the presence of Peter at Rome, that we might be carrying our scepticism too far, if we rejected it altogether. (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. ii., cap. 13.) Perhaps the relation of Eusebius, so far as it is supported by Justin Martyr, may enable us to ascertain the truth. (Burton's Bampton Lectures.)

* Tillemont Memoires, tom. i., p. 185. Art. xxxiv. 4to. Paris, 1692.

† For a lucid account of the Mamertine prisons in Rome, see "A Description of the Antiquities and other Curiosities of Rome." By the Rev. Edward Burton, M.A., (D.D.) Pp. 26—32. 8vo. edit. Oxford, 1821.

‡ Baronii Eccles. Annal., ad an. 68, sect. 23.

§ "It might be expected, that this part of the history of Peter would be embellished by Roman writers; and though few stories have been oftener repeated than that of his escaping from prison, and being induced to return by an apparition of his heavenly Master, it can hardly be said to rest upon sufficient authority. In these cases, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to separate truth from fiction." (Dr. E. Burton.)

‖ Among other foolish and absurd stories which a morbid superstition has produced, is the following:—that in the stone upon which our Lord stood while he talked with

doubtless scourged, after the manner of the Romans, who were wont first to whip those malefactors who were condemned to the severe and capital punishments. Having saluted his brethren, he was brought out of the prison, and led to the summit of the Vatican Mount, near the Tiber, the place designed for his execution. The death to which he was adjudged was crucifixion, as of all others the most ignominious and terrible; nevertheless, he entreated the officer, who superintended his martyrdom, that he might not suffer in the ordinary way, but that he might be crucified with his head downwards,* affirming that he was unworthy to die in the same posture in which his Lord was crucified before him. Peter had witnessed the glory of his Master on Mount Tabor; that glory was ever blazing before his mental sight, and into that, as a faithful servant, whose work had been well done, he was now called to enter. He received the crown of martyrdom at Rome,† in the same persecution with Paul, in the year 68 of our Lord.

With regard to the earthly remains of the Apostle, they are said to have been embalmed by Marcellinus, a Presbyter, after the Jewish manner, and interred in the Vatican, near the Triumphal Way; and that over his grave a church was subsequently erected, which being destroyed by Heliogabalus, his body was removed to the cemetery in the Appian Way, two miles distant from Rome; there it remained until the time of Cornelius, Bishop of the church in that city, who reconveyed it to the Vatican, where it quietly remained until the time of Constantine, who, out of his great regard for the Christian faith, caused many churches to be erected in the capital, rebuilt and enlarged the Vatican, in honour of the Apostle, and erected a splendid vault for his remains.‡

Thus lived and died Peter; ever faithful and diligent in his office

Peter, he left the impression of his feet: this stone has ever since been preserved as a sacred relic, and, after several translations, was ultimately fixed in the church of St. Sebastian, the martyr, where it is kept and visited with great expressions of reverence and devotion to this day.

* The punishments inflicted upon the Christians were various: one way to crucify them was with their heads downwards, a barbarity which was practised in the days of Seneca. "Video istic cruces non unius quidem generis, sed aliter ab aliis fabricatas. Alii capite conversos in terram suspendere; alii per obscœna stipitem egerunt; alii brachia patibulo explicuerunt." (Senecæ Opera, Consol. ad Marciam, p. 123. Antwerp, 1632. Fol.)

† "On the whole, I should be inclined to listen to the tradition of the two Apostles having suffered martyrdom on the same day; and though there is this material difference in the accounts, that some suppose a year to have intervened between the two events, yet, the coincidence of their suffering on the same day, is still noticed in almost every tradition upon the subject. The weight of evidence is certainly in favour of their having suffered on the same day, and in the same year; and though the precise date is by no means settled by chronologists, we are, perhaps, not far from the truth, if we say generally, that their martyrdom took place in the year 67 or 68." (Dr. E. Burton.) See also Mosheim's Eccles. Hist., vol. i., cent. i., book i., part i., chap. v., p. 70. Note by Murdock. Soames's edit. London, 1845.

‡ Alban Butler gravely tells us, that the heads of the two Apostles are kept in silver busts in the church of St. John Lateran, but that one half of the body of each Apostle is deposited together in a rich vault in the great church of St. Paul, on the Ostian road, and the other half of both bodies in a more stately vault in the Vatican church, which place is called, from primitive antiquity, "the confession of St. Peter and Limina Apostolorum," and is resorted to by pilgrims from all parts of Christendom.

to instruct the ignorant, reprove the erroneous, strengthen the weak, confirm the strong, reclaim the vicious, and to turn many to righteousness. Not only did he perform the duty which pertained to himself, but, as one of the principal superintendents of the church, and as one who was sensible of the value and worth of souls, he was careful to remind others of theirs, earnestly persuading and entreating the Pastors and Governors of it, "to feed the flock of God," to take upon them the rule and inspection of it freely and willingly, not having some sinister end in view, but from a sincere desire to benefit the children of men, and to glorify God. In these the holy Apostle was "steadfast and immovable," and "always abounding in the work." Therefore, of all the Apostles of Jesus Christ, Peter presents to us a life the most instructive. Its detail is ample, his character is thrown prominently forward, and is distinctly marked. Simplicity of mind, and ardour of temper, are its chief features. Hence resulted both his devotion to his Master, and his abandonment of him: an abundance of courage of the heart, but a deficiency of that of the mind. His unsuspecting impetuosity hurried him into professions which he could not keep, and his frankness and good feeling prompted a ready and sincere repentance. He is a character, the very frailties of which win us over. They excite our sympathy, while they command our respect.* He suffered for Christ: he now "rests from his labours, and his works follow him."

CHAPTER IV.

State of the Church at Stephen's Death—The Rev. Richard Watson—Saul of Tarsus—His Character and Conversion—His Birth-place and Parentage—His Name—Education—And Trade—Leaves Damascus on account of Persecution—History of that City—Paul visits Jerusalem—Suspicions of the Church—Barnabas—Is introduced to the Apostles—Peril from the Hellenist Jews—Is taken to Cæsarea—Tranquil State of the Church—Dr. Lardner—Petronius—Philo—Cause of the Cessation of Persecution—The Call of Paul to the Gentiles—Visits Antioch—Agabus—Famine—Liberality of the Antiochian Christians—Paul and Barnabas visit Jerusalem—Are set apart by the Holy Ghost—Asia Minor—Description of the Country—Seleucia—Cyprus—Plan pursued by the Apostles in preaching the Gospel—Mark—Paphos, its Character—Sergius Paulus—Elymas—Antioch of Pisidia—Opposition to the Word—Iconium—Paul cures a Cripple—Idolatrous Homage about to be rendered by the Inhabitants—They are restrained by the Apostles—Change of Affairs—Public Opinion—Paul returns to Antioch—Controversy on Mosaic Rites—Dissension between Paul and Barnabas—Timothy—Phrygia—Galatia—Vision of Paul—Philippi—Persecution—Its Cause—Dr. A. Clarke—The Apostles are cast into Prison, and commanded to be scourged—The Earthquake—Its Effects—The Magistrates alarmed—Paul claims the Privilege of a Roman Citizen—Propriety of so doing—Paul visits Thessalonica—Opposition of the Jews—Berea—The Success of the Gospel—Are again assailed by the Jews—Athens—Character of the Hearers of the Apostle in that City—Stoics and Epicureans—Dionysius—Corinth—Banishment of Jews from Rome—Aquila and Priscilla—Fabulous Accounts of Zacchæus—The ministerial La-

* Evans's Scripture Biography, p. 226.

bours of Paul at Corinth—Persecution at Corinth—Lucius Junius Gallio—Paul is brought before the Proconsul—And is acquitted—Revisits Antioch—State of Judea at this Period—Journeys of Paul—Apollos—Riot at Ephesus—Diana of the Ephesians—Effects of the Gospel in the City—Revisits Philippi and the neighbouring District—Journeys towards Jerusalem—Prophetic Intimations—Agabus—The Inspiration of Paul—Arrives at Jerusalem—Perilous Situation of the Apostle—Means of Conciliation—Trophimus—Disturbance in the Temple—Claudius Lysias—Paul is rescued—Addresses the Multitude—The Tumult is resumed—Sicarii—Injustice of Claudius Lysias—Paul is brought before the Sanhedrim—Insolence of Ananias—Paul's Defence—Dissension between the Sadducees and Pharisees—Desperate Conduct of the Jews—Conspiracy to kill Paul—Nephew of Paul—The Apostle is sent to Cæsarea—Felix—Paul's Defence—Venality of the Governor—Festus—Schemes of the Jews—Paul claims the Right of a Roman—Appeals to Nero—Agrippa—Paul is sent to Rome—His Condition in that City—Reason of his long Residence there—Progress of the Gospel—Narcissus—Pomponia Græcina—Torpetes—Poppæa Sabina—Paul is liberated—His subsequent Journeys—His Return to Rome—Melancholy State of the Church—Paul arrested—And beheaded—Clemens Romanus—Death of Nero.

When Stephen fell, a great luminary in the Christian world was extinguished. "He was a burning and a shining light;" but men refused to walk in it, and it was quenched amidst the sighs of the church, and the boisterous exultations of her persecutors. An event so ominous and mournful filled the whole company of the believers with alarm. Devout men, who "carried Stephen to his burial, made great lamentation over him." The members of the despised, but sacred, community at Jerusalem hastened from the storm at this signal, "and were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles." "But," says the Rev. Richard Watson, "whilst the church was crying, 'Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth,' Almighty God was preparing to assert his own cause, not in vengeance, but in mercy. He was about to supply the place of Stephen with one of still greater character; to despatch truth with her arms of light, to seize in the very camp of the enemy a man, whose learning, eloquence, and boldness should elevate the Gospel before the eyes of all the world, and who should equally confound Jew and Gentile with the fact of his conversion and the force of his appeals. That man was Saul of Tarsus, whose name is now not less dear to us, than it was terrible to the first Christians. He is first introduced to our notice by the death of Stephen; and he, with whom we converse daily, and seem to have contracted a holy and tender friendship, to that death was consenting. More than this, from that moment he became a persecutor himself. In the strong language of the Scripture, 'he made havoc of the church;' he spared neither men nor women, in his merciless bigotry; and, by the bitterness of his ungodly zeal, the church was scattered as a flock of sheep before the wolf. It was in one of these cruel excursions, that 'Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter,' was arrested, not by judgment, but by mercy. His destination was Damascus, and his sanguinary commission against all 'of this way.' He was approaching the scene of his anticipated triumphs over the followers of the Nazarene; but, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther,' was the decision of

one stronger than he. A light from heaven suddenly arrests his attention, and the supernatural brightness prostrates him to the earth. He hears the voice of Jesus, whom he had been persecuting, and is convinced that He was both Lord and Christ. He is led blind and humbled to Damascus; the proud scholar of Gamaliel receives instructions from Ananias, and his convictions, operating on an honest, but heretofore mistaken, mind, make him hasten to repair the injuries he had done; and, at the hazard of his life, he preaches the once-detested name of Jesus, acknowledging, with love unspeakable, that he had obtained mercy, 'who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious.'" *

Paul was born at Tarsus, the metropolis of Cilicia, a city both rich and populous; but what contributed to its honour and celebrity, it possessed an academy, or college, furnished with schools of learning, where the scholars were accustomed to apply themselves so closely to their studies, that Strabo informs us, they excelled in all the arts of polite literature, and philosophy, so as to surpass other seminaries, even those of Athens and Alexandria. It was a Roman *municipium*, or free corporation, having been invested with many privileges and immunities by Julius Cæsar and Augustus. His parents were Jews, and of the ancient stock, not entering into that community by the gate of proselytism, but originally descended from that nation: this is evidently what he meant, when he represented himself as "an Hebrew of the Hebrews," signifying that either both his parents were Jews, or that all his ancestry had been so. They pertained to the tribe of Benjamin, whose founder was the youngest son of the patriarch Jacob. From his receiving the name of Saul it has been supposed that he was the first-born son of his parents: that he was not their only child, appears from the mention made of his "sister's son." (Acts xxiii. 16.) Whether Andronicus, Junia, and Herodion, whom he terms, συγγενεις μου, (Rom. xvi. 7, 11,) were of the number of his relations by blood, or only belonged to the same tribe with himself, is a question on which the learned have differed in opinion. We find him described by two names in Scripture, one of Hebrew, and the other of Latin, derivation; probably referring to his Jewish origin, and to his Roman connexions. Saul was a frequent and common name in the tribe of Benjamin, ever since the first King of Israel, who was so called, was chosen out of that tribe; and in memory of that event parents gave their children this name at their circumcision. His other name was Paul, which some imagine was assumed at the time he embraced Christianity; others say that it was adopted in remembrance of the conversion of Sergius Paulus, the Roman Governor, in imitation of the custom generally followed by Emperors and Generals, who took the name of the cities and countries which they had subdued in war, as conferring additional honour and title to themselves; as Scipio Africanus, Cæsar Germanicus, Parthicus, Sarmaticus, &c. This interpretation is not only too far-fetched to merit any claim to plausibility, but it is utterly incon-

* Watson's Works, vol. iii., pp. 36—38. 8vo. edit. London, 1834.

sistent with Paul's character and mission. The conjecture of Origen * comes nearer the truth ; namely, that this double name was given to him at his circumcision : Saul, relating to his Jewish original, and Paul, referring to his birth-place, a free city of the Roman empire. This idea seems to be countenanced by the Scripture ; where we read, " Saul, who is also called Paul." † (Acts xiii. 9.) This is probably the reason why Luke, when he speaks in connexion with the Jews of Syria, invariably designates him " Saul ;" but subsequently, when he left those parts, and laboured among the Gentiles, he terms him, " Paul," as a *cognomen* more frequent and familiar. This name is also affixed to his Epistles which were addressed to the Gentile churches ; and, finally, if it were chosen by himself when he entered the Christian community, it was in perfect accordance with the manners and customs of the Hebrews, who, on solemn and momentous occasions, and more especially when they embraced a more strict and ascetic mode of life, often changed their names, and assumed one which they had not before.

In his youth Paul was brought up in the schools of Tarsus, and instructed in those liberal arts and sciences with which the people at that day were conversant. Attempts have been made to show from his writings that he was familiar with Greek literature ; and Dr. Bentley has not hesitated to affirm, that " as Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," so it is manifest in this chapter alone, (Acts xxvii.,) if nothing else had been now extant, that St. Paul was a great master in all the learning of the Greeks.‡ An authority like that of Bentley, in a question of Greek literature, is not to be lightly set aside ; yet, on referring to the evidence which has been furnished both by himself and others in support of the opinion to which he has lent his sanction, it will not be found to justify the strong and decided language which he has employed. This evidence consists chiefly of a few supposed references, in the discourse alluded to by Dr. Bentley, to certain dogmas of the Greek philosophers ; but even supposing the Apostle to have had these in his eye, it will not follow that he must have studied the writings in which these dogmas were unfolded and defended, because he might have learned enough of them to guide him to such references, from those controversial encounters with the philosophers of the Epicureans and Stoics, which we are told he had in the market-place at Athens, previous to the delivering of his oration on the Areopagus ; of allusion to three

* Origen. Præfat. in Epist. ad Romanos.

† Lightfoot says, that he had a double name, according to his double relation ; the Hebrew name, " Saul," as he was a Hebrew ; the Roman name, " Paul," as a Roman. It was common in the Jewish nation, that, among the Jews, they went by a Jewish name ; but among the Heathens by another ; that is, either by the same name turned into the heathen language ; as Tabitha to the Jews, was Dorcas to them that spake Greek ; and Thomas to the Hebrews, was Didymus to the Greeks ; and perhaps Silas to the Jews, was Tertius to the Romans, (Rom. xvi. 22,) from שלוש " three ;" and Jason was Secundus : compare Rom. xvi. 21, with Acts xx. 4. Or they went by some different name ; as Herod, in Luke iii. 1, is Agrippa in Josephus ; and John is also Mark. (Acts xii. 12.) (Works, vol. xii., p. 455. Pitman's edit. 8vo. London, 1825. See Tholuck's Life and Writings of St. Paul. Bib. Cabinet, vol. xxviii., p. 34.)

‡ Boyle's Lecture Sermons, vol. i., folio ; Bentley's Confutation of Atheism, Serm. iii., p. 22. London, 1739.

quotations made by him from Greek poets, one from the Phænomena of his countryman Aratus, (Acts xvii. 28,) one from a lost play of Menander, (1 Cor. xv. 33,) and one from Epimenides; (Titus i. 12;) all of which, however, bear the general character of *gnomes*, or proverbs, and might consequently find their way to the Apostle merely as part of the current coin of popular conversation, without his having once visited the treasury where they were originally drawn; and also, of certain similarities of idea and expression between some passages of the Apostle, and some that are found in classic authors,* but none of which are of such a nature as necessarily to lead to the conclusion that the coincidence is more than purely accidental. It must be allowed, however, that the mere circumstance of having spent his early years in such a city as Tarsus, could not but exert a very powerful influence on the mind of such a man as Paul, in the way of sharpening his faculties, refining his taste, and enlarging the circle of his sympathies and affections.† Being destined to the pursuits of a Doctor of the Jewish law, he was well instructed from his earliest years in the elements of Rabbinical lore.

Paul was also brought up to a particular trade, according to the great maxim and principle of Jewish law, that "he who teaches not his son a trade, teaches him to be a thief." They thought it not only fitting, but an important part of education, for their wisest and most learned Rabbins to be taught a manual trade.‡ It is therefore not at all improbable that when in the schools of Tarsus, he acquired his skill in that handicraft by which, in later years, he frequently supported himself. (Acts xviii. 3; 1 Cor. iv. 12.) This occupation is described by Luke as that of a σκηνοποιος, a word regarding the meaning of which there has been no small difference of opinion. Luther makes it a "carpet-maker," and others, "maker of mats or mattrasses;" Michaëlis and Haenlein, "tool-maker;" Chrysostom and others, "worker in leather;" Hug and Eichhorn, "maker of tent-cloth;" but most critics agree with our translators in rendering it "tent-maker." Paul was a student under Gamaliel, a distinguished teacher of the law, who is supposed to be the person, who, under that name, was celebrated in the writings of the Talmudists, as one of the seven teachers to whom the title "Rabban" was given; he was a member of the Sanhedrim in the early days of Christianity, who by his favourable interference saved the Apostles from an ignominious death; and is also said to have occupied a seat in the Sanhedrim, if not the presidency, during the reigns of Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius.

* Horne's Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, vol. iv., p. 343. Ninth edit. London, 1846.

† Kitto's Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature, *in loc.*

‡ Nothing was more common in their writings, than to term their learned men from the calling in which they had been brought up; Rabbi Jose, the tanner; Rabbi Jochanan, the shoemaker; Rabbi Juda, the baker, &c.; a custom which was taken up by the Christians, especially the Monks and ascetics of primitive times, who, with their strict profession, and almost incredible exercise of devotion, took upon themselves a particular trade, at which they daily wrought, and by their manual labour maintained themselves. (Dr. Cave; see also Tholuck on the Life and Writings of Paul; Bib. Cabinet, vol. xxviii., p. 32.)

Confessedly, Paul possessed great advantages in his character and early history, for the enterprise in which he had engaged; but, beyond this, his preparation was not of man; (Gal. i. 12;) he conferred not with flesh and blood; and supernatural sight was vouchsafed for his guidance. Immediately after his conversion, he went from Damascus,* to the neighbouring districts of Arabia, when he probably associated, with the occasional duties of preaching and teaching, such exercises of soul in solitude, as might prepare him for entering upon a still wider field of usefulness. From Paul's own showing, he did not stay long in Damascus. He had, as yet, many things to learn. The whole doctrine of remission of sins through faith in the atonement of Christ was novel to him; and so far from being at present fit for the office of an Apostle, the humblest disciple in Damascus was his superior in knowledge. If the conversion of Paul had been an ordinary circumstance, his obvious course was to have stayed in that city, till he was more fully instructed in the new faith. Ananias was at hand, who would have opened the eyes of his mind, as he had restored his bodily sight; or he might have returned at once to Jerusalem, and obtained instruction from the Apostles whose lives he had so recently sought; but he acted under a higher power, which directed all his steps. It pleased God to reveal to him the elements of the Gospel by special illumination; and as the opportunity occurred, he doubtless endeavoured to extend the knowledge of the truth to others. For the greater part of three years he remained in Arabia and Damascus; but from the surprise which his presence caused in Jerusalem, it may be naturally inferred that he could not have been long in the latter place, where he certainly preached the Gospel, or the sincerity of his conversion would have been generally known, On his return thither, he went immediately into the synagogues, and publicly proclaimed his belief in Jesus Christ, boldly maintaining him to be the Son of God. "But Paul increased the more in strength," became too powerful a disputant for the most skilful defenders of the ancient faith, "and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus." This people, provoked to the utmost by their oft-repeated dismay, took counsel to put him to death as an apostate from the faith of which he had been the zealous advocate, as well as the commissioned minister of its vengeance on the heretics whose cause he was now defending. In contriving their sanguinary scheme, they procured the support of the government of the city. Damascus being then not in the possession of the Romans, but of Aretas, the father-in-law of Herod Antipas, whose daughter Herod had married, but whom he afterwards repudiated, which event led to a war between those two Princes; the King of Arabia had selected a Governor, who had jurisdiction over the whole of that part of Syria, and who resided constantly in Damascus. To him the

*Damascus was a place not more venerable for its antiquity, than it was considerable for strength, stateliness, and situation. If it were not erected by, it gave a title to, Abraham's steward; and it was the noblest city of all Syria, situated in a most healthy country, and fruitful soil, watered with numerous fountains and streams, rich in merchandise, adorned with splendid buildings, magnificent temples, and fortified with strong garrisons; so that Julian termed it, "the holy and great Damascus." (Dr. Cave.)

Jews addressed themselves; they probably endeavoured to represent Paul as an offender, or a spy, or otherwise disaffected towards the existing order of things, especially as there was war between that country and Rome on account of the affair above referred to. The Governor did not hesitate to assist the Jews, but, with a detachment of the city garrison, kept watch at the gates to apprehend the suspected person. The Christians determined to remove Paul from the danger which threatened him; and, accordingly, one night they placed the future Apostle of the Gentiles in a basket;* and through the window of one of their houses, contiguous to the high wall which surrounded the city, they let him down on the outside. (Acts ix. 21, &c.; 2 Cor. xi. 32.)

Paul was cradled in persecution, and rocked by the storm. Having made his escape from Damascus, he took refuge in Jerusalem. Three years had nearly elapsed since the period of his conversion before he had held any communication with the leaders of the church; and this interview he now sought. With all the assurance of Christian faith, and ardent love towards those to whom his religious sympathies led him to cleave, he "assayed" to mingle in a familiar and friendly way with the apostolic company, and also offered himself to their sacred fellowship as a Christian brother and friend. What singular feelings must have attended this visit! He was returning to it from a spiritual, as Ezra had from a bodily, captivity. What an emotion must have smitten his heart at the first distant view of the temple, that house of sacrifice, that edifice of prophecy! Its sacrifices had been realized, the Lamb of God had been offered. As he approached the gates, he might have trodden on the very spot where he had assisted at the death of Stephen. When he entered the city, what thoughts, doubtless, were suggested by the haunts of his youth, and by the site of the spots where he had so eagerly sought that knowledge which he had now for ever abandoned! But the memory of his former state was not more vivid in his own bosom than in those who suffered persecution at his hands! His attempts to obtain a hearing from the church were at first abortive. The brethren would not believe, without further evidence, a fact so incredible as his conversion. They repulsed his advances, as being some new scheme to involve them in

* Mr. Addison, a modern traveller, says, that, winding round the walls on the outskirts of the city, he and his companions came to a point where they were broken at the top, at which Paul is said to have been let down in a basket to escape the indignation of the Jews. From hence, passing on through some pretty lanes, they came to an open green spot, surrounded by trees, over the tops of which were seen the distant summits of Mount Hermon. At this place, they were informed, Saul had arrived, when as he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly there shined round about him a great light from heaven. These localities are pointed out with the greatest confidence by the Damascene Christians of all sects, and are held in great veneration; nor is it difficult to suppose that the true spots have been handed down by tradition among the followers of the cross. The street which is called Straight (Acts ix. 11) is still found in Damascus, or at any rate a street bearing that name. Mr. Addison says it is a mile in length, and so called because it leads direct from the gate to the castle or palace of the Pasha. The house of Judas, also, to which Ananias went, is still pointed out, as well as that of Ananias himself. How much credulity may have had to do in fixing on and perpetuating the recollection of these localities, it is probably easier to suspect than to ascertain. (See Addison, C. G., Damascus and Palmyra, vol. ii., p. 92, *et seq.*; Kitto's Bib. Cyclop.)

difficulties, and perhaps render them liable to a punishment which their prudence had hitherto enabled them to escape. "They were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple." (Acts ix. 26.) In this painful dilemma, to be answered by silence, aversion, and suspicious looks, by men whose bosoms he knew were full of frankness and charity; to be cast out as a hypocrite by the Apostles of that faith for which he had sacrificed all earthly prospects; to be kept at a distance by his partners in everlasting life, and to be hindered by past evil from accomplishing present good; Paul suffered not himself to be disheartened. Providentially, he was found by Barnabas, who being, like Paul, a Hellenist Jew, and not unlikely acquainted with him, naturally felt some sympathy with an individual whose country was only a few miles distant from his own. Barnabas soon found in Paul the indubitable signs of a real convert, and of a regenerated and sanctified mind, and hesitated not to introduce him to the Apostles, Peter, and James the Lord's brother, for with these alone did Paul commune: the rest of the Apostles were probably absent from Jerusalem at that time. "And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem." (Acts ix. 28.) Imitating the spirit of the proto-martyr, whose death he had himself been instrumental in effecting, "he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Hellenists," doubtless the same persons among whom he had himself formerly been enrolled as a violent and uncompromising opposer of that faith which he was now advocating. By these people he was received with all that vindictive hate which their carnal and depraved hearts could stir up, and he was at once denounced to the Jewish community as a vile apostate. To prove, that, although Paul might see proper to alter his views, and embrace the truth, they had not done so; forthwith these Hellenists resolved to punish the bold disowner of his father's faith, by a martyrdom similar to that of Stephen; but the disciples heard of his danger, and provided for his escape. The civil authority, also, was held at present with too tight a hand for these bigots to settle the question with Paul in the same summary manner as they had done with Stephen, although their rage must have been much more furious against an open apostate from their party. Their secret machinations were fully as dangerous as those of their brethren of Damascus. Paul was therefore withdrawn from the perilous ground, and conducted by the disciples to Cæsarea, whence he sailed for his native town of Tarsus, probably the first visit he had made to it since the day on which he departed from his father's house to go to Jerusalem as a student of Jewish theology.

Luke, in a few words, gives a delightful picture of the period which followed the conversion of the man of Tarsus: "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." (Acts ix. 31.) The Evangelist does not specify to what particular period of time he meant this description to apply; but he adds nothing which would hinder us from extending it to the whole interval of time between the con-

version of Saul, and his being subsequently brought to Antioch by Barnabas: nevertheless several reasons have been assigned for this cessation of open hostilities from without. In the first place, the individual who had been the most active in exciting the persecution, who was, in short, its leader, and who was the best qualified to carry it on, had been converted to the truth as it is in Jesus; he had not only ceased his opposition, but had been removed from Judea, so that his presence in the metropolis no longer excited the animosity and displeasure of the populace. But, in the second place, it is not improbable that the civil state of things in Judea contributed much to direct the attention of the Jews to affairs which related to themselves, in a manner which excited the deepest interest. Dr. Lardner gives the following account of this event:—"Soon after Caligula's accession, the Jews at Alexandria suffered very much from the Egyptians in that city, and at length their oratories were all destroyed. In the third year of that Emperor's reign, Petronius was sent into Syria, with orders to set up the statue of Caligula in the temple at Jerusalem. This was to the Jews a thunder-stroke. They must have been too much engaged after this to mind anything else, as may appear from the accounts which Philo and Josephus have given us of this affair. Josephus says, 'That Caligula ordered Petronius to go with an army to Jerusalem, to set up his statue in the temple there; enjoining him, if the Jews opposed it, to put to death all who made any resistance, and to make all the rest of the nation slaves. Petronius, therefore, marched from Antioch into Judea with three legions, and a large body of auxiliaries, raised in Syria. All were hereupon filled with consternation, the army being come as far as Ptolemais.'" * Philo gives the same account of the alarm as Josephus. He describes the Jews, "as abandoning their cities and villages and open country, as going to Petronius in Phœnicia, both men and women, the old, the young, the middle-aged; as throwing themselves on the ground before Petronius with weeping and lamentation." † An industrious commentator has well observed, ‡ the effect of this movement in diverting the minds of the persecutors from the Christians can be easily conceived. The prospect that the images of the Roman Emperor were about to be set up by violence in the temple, or that, in case of resistance, death or slavery was to be their portion, together with the advance of a large army to execute that purpose, all tended to throw the country into alarm. By the providence of God, this event drew aside the attention of the bloody-minded persecutors from a feeble and a bleeding church. Anxious for their own safety, the Jews ceased to afflict the Christians; and thus by the conversion of the main instrument in persecution, and by the universal alarm for the welfare of the nation, the trembling and infant church was permitted to obtain repose.

It was during the continuance of Paul at Tarsus, that the first

* Lardner's Works, vol. i., pp. 101, 102. London edit., 1829.
† Philo De Legat. ad Cai., pp. 1024, 1025.
‡ Barnes's Notes on the Acts, &c., *in loco*.

great call of the Gentiles had been made through the instrumentality of Peter. Divine wisdom was manifest in this event. Though the twelve evidently were not intended to labour to any great extent in the Gentile field, it was nevertheless most fitting that the first entrance into it should be achieved by those who had been directed and personally commissioned by the Saviour himself, and who, on account of having enjoyed his bodily presence for so long a time, were most qualified to judge of the propriety of a movement which was at once novel and unprecedented. This attempt having been made, and proved to be cheering and successful, and the controversy resulting thereupon having been decided, the way was now fully open for the complete extension of the glorious Gospel among the Gentiles. The Apostles, hearing in Jerusalem of the happy effects which had followed the attempt of some Hellenistic refugees from the persecution at the time of Stephen's martyrdom, who had diligently proclaimed the tidings of salvation in Antioch, despatched Barnabas to confirm the good work. Arriving in that city, his heart was glad at witnessing the prosperity which had crowned the labours of those who, in the midst of a fiery persecution which had driven them from Jerusalem, had notwithstanding dropped a seed, the result of which was now white unto harvest. Barnabas soon saw and felt the want of zealous, indefatigable, and efficient labourers; of those whose education and habits would fit them, not only to labour among the professors of the Jewish faith, but also to communicate the doctrines of Christ to the Greeks. His eye was immediately fixed upon Paul, whose daring zeal and masterly learning had been so signally displayed among the Hellenistic adversaries of the cross at Jerusalem, and with whom he had formerly been united. He was invited, and the invitation was cordially accepted. They immediately returned to Antioch, and earnestly devoted themselves to their interesting and important duties.

After Paul had been labouring some time in Antioch, there came down to that city from Jerusalem certain persons endued with the spirit of prophecy; among whom was one named Agabus, who, under the influence of inspiration, made known that there was speedily approaching a great famine.* This prediction was fulfilled in the positive infliction of the calamity in the days of Claudius Cæsar. The Christian society of Antioch resolved upon assisting their brethren in Judea; and all having contributed according to their ability, Paul and Barnabas were commissioned to convey their bounty to the metropolis. On their return, they continued to labour at Antioch, in company with several other Prophets and Teachers, of whom are mentioned Simeon, who had the Roman surname of Niger, Lucius the

* Some writers suppose that the famine was general; but most modern commentators unite in understanding that the large terms of the original apply not to the whole world, nor even to all the Roman empire, but, as in Luke ii. 1, to Judea only. Statements respecting four famines, which occurred in the reign of Claudius, are produced by the commentators who support this view; and as all the countries put together would not make up a tenth part of even the Roman empire, they think it plain that the words must be understood to apply to that famine which in the fourth year of Claudius overspread Palestine. (Kitto.)

Cyrenian, and Manaen, a foster-brother of Herod the Tetrarch, until, during one of their common ministrations, the Holy Spirit revealed his will to certain brethren, that Paul and Barnabas should be consecrated for the work to which he had called them. The work was, of course, well understood; it was that for which Paul had already received a commission; namely, "to open the eyes of the Gentiles, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." The brethren, therefore, understanding the nature and object of the command, consecrated both Paul and Barnabas for their missionary tour; and, after fasting and prayer, in which they supplicated the blessing of God upon them and their labours, they "laid their hands on them," and "sent them away." The province designed for them by the Spirit was Asia Minor. Its ancient and wealthy cities abounded with Jews, and from long civilization the Gentiles were in such an advanced state as to be ashamed of their childish and comfortless idolatry. On its eastern part it was open to unlimited communication with the rest of Asia; on its western it had intercourse, not only with Greece, but even with the distant west of Europe, where, in no long time after this, the earliest Gallic Churches founded along the course of the Rhone, looked hitherward for their origin. Thus, the soil was not only fertile in itself, but so situated, that the seed of the word might hence be flung far and wide over the rest of the earth.* The Most High had, doubtless, wise reasons for laying the foundations of the Gospel deep in Palestine, and for not extending it into other countries, till it was firmly established in Judea. If we could dive into the divine counsels, we should see, that the time did not arrive earlier for the Gentiles to be converted; we should see, that if the Apostles had left the Jews to their prejudices, and gone at once into distant countries, their success would not have been the same. We may not at present see the reason of this, and human wisdom might have expected a different course; but when the conclusions of reason are different from the ways of Providence, we want no farther argument to tell us, that reason is wrong, but that the counsels of God must be right.†

In this first great missionary tour of the Apostle of the Gentiles, he descended from Antioch, in company with Barnabas, and set sail for Seleucia, and from thence to Cyprus. It might have been expected that Paul's first care would have been to visit his countrymen in Cilicia, more especially as it lay on his road to the places where he ultimately preached. He, however, went by sea, which confirms the notion, that he had previously planted the Gospel in the neighbourhood: this fact is still more apparent, when we consider that he commenced his second journey by confirming the churches in Syria and Cilicia; (Acts xv. 41;) an expression which implies that this was not the first time of his visiting them. It is probable, that this line of route was suggested by Barnabas, who was a native of Cyprus; and as the Gospel had been introduced into the island shortly after Stephen's death, the way was, probably, prepared

* Evans's Scripture Biography, p. 341.

† Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist. of the First Century, p. 146.

and open for these messengers of the truth.* Landing at Salamis, on the south-western part of the island, they first preached in the synagogue of the Jews, who were very numerous, and constituted a large proportion of the population of the isle. The method observed by the Apostles in all the places to which they came, was the same with that which continued to be pursued by Paul throughout the whole of his apostleship. Wherever there were Jews, in conformity with the divine procedure, and the injunction of the Saviour, they went into their synagogues, and made known the purposes of their mission.† Those of the Jews who received the Gospel, formed the connecting link for addressing the proselytes of the gate, and the idolatrous Gentiles; and when the members of the synagogues rejected the word of reconciliation which was offered, the Apostles, agreeably to the spirit of the revelation made to Paul, lost no time in ineffectual disputations, but forthwith turned to the Gentiles. Here it appears they were joined by Mark, the nephew of Barnabas, who was, probably, staying upon the island at that time, and who now accompanied them as an assistant in the apostolic ministry. Traversing the whole island from east to west, they came to Paphos, a splendid city, famed for the magnificent temple and licentious worship of the Paphian Venus, a deity to whom the whole of Cyprus was consecrated, from which the goddess is said to have derived one of her most numerous designations; Cypris being a name under which she was frequently worshipped. The females of the island were so completely devoted to her service, not merely in the temple-worship, but also in domestic manners, that, throughout the world, the name "Cyprian woman" is but another word for one who is abandoned to every species of voluptuousness. The worship of this deity the Apostles came avowedly to destroy, and to establish in its place a faith, whose leading principle was purity of heart and life. In this city resided Sergius Paulus, the Proconsul of the island; a man of considerable wisdom and prudence, but miserably seduced by the wicked artifices of Bar-Jesus, a Jewish impostor, who called himself Elymas. This man, apprehending the nature of the doctrines taught by the Apostles to be in no degree advantageous to his schemes of self-aggrandizement

* This remark is not intended to give any countenance to the tradition of Lazarus having gone to Cyprus after the martyrdom of Stephen, and having been Bishop of the church at Cytœum for thirty years. Epiphanius has preserved a tradition of Lazarus having lived thirty years after his resurrection; (Hær., lxvi. 34, p. 652;) but he says nothing of his residence in Cyprus, though he was likely to have heard of it, having been himself the metropolitan Bishop in that island. See Tillemont's Memoires, tom. ii., p. 59. Natalis Alexander, Sæc. I., Dissert. xvi., p. 608.

† To the Jews, in the first instance, were committed the oracles of God. Our Saviour himself was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and in commanding his disciples to go forth to preach the Gospel, he subjoined, "beginning at Jerusalem." In agreement with these indications of the divine will, the Apostle Paul describes (Rom. i. 16) the Gospel as the power of God to salvation, "to the Jew *first*;" and in the fulfilment of his office, his attention was directed first to his own countrymen. These particulars are interesting as matters of history, and as illustrative of the character of the divine dispensations; and, taken in connexion with the remarkable distinction, in the commission of the Apostles, between the circumcision and the uncircumcision, (Gal. ii. 9,) they seem to impose an obligation upon Christian churches in all ages, to direct their collective wisdom for the benefit of the Jews, in imitation of the apostolic model. (Welsh's Elements.)

and favour, saw with alarm, that they were taking hold of the mind of the Proconsul, and endeavoured to frustrate their influence. Beholding this, Paul fixed his eyes on the miserable impostor, and, with hallowed indignation, denounced an awful punishment. (Acts xiii. 10, 11.) Sergius professed faith in Jesus; and his name is deserving of record, as being the first idolatrous Gentile who was admitted to the Gospel.*

From Cyprus, after a voyage of about two hundred miles, they reached Perga in Pamphylia: here they parted company with Mark, who appears to have abandoned Paul and Barnabas at the very threshold of their mission. The prospect was undoubtedly one of toil and danger; but, undismayed, they pushed into the interior, and arrived at the Pisidian Antioch. The history of their proceedings in this city is a specimen of the course of their ministry in most of the towns through which they passed. They opened their commission with preaching in the synagogue to the Jews. Among these they made a certain number of converts, and laid the foundations of a church. They continued in the city throughout the week: in the mean time, the fame of their doctrines and their eloquence extended far and near, so that when the next Sabbath arrived, almost the whole city swarmed around the synagogue, to hear "the word of this salvation." The unbelieving Jews were filled with envy, so that when Paul renewed his discourse, they openly disputed with him, denied his conclusions, abused his doctrine, and resisted with violence and blasphemy any further preaching of the truth among them. The Apostles then quitted the synagogue, and betook themselves to the Gentiles, who heard and received the word with joy. But as the means of admission into the kingdom of God which they preached, was the sanctification of the Spirit, and not the circumcision of the flesh, the bigoted Jews, considering this as proclaiming the abrogation of the law of Moses, were filled with greater rage than before, which increased in proportion to the progress of the faith of Christ; a great disturbance was raised, the result of which was, the Apostles were driven out of the city. "But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium." (Acts xiii. 51.)

Iconium was the capital of Lycaonia, and is mentioned by several classical writers as a place of considerable importance; but nothing definite is known at the present day of its former size and character. At first, the Apostles were received with cordiality and joy, Almighty God affixing his seal to the doctrine they delivered, by "many signs and wonders;" but Jewish malice speedily was displayed, tumult and sedition were excited, and the Apostles compelled to escape for their lives to Lystra, where they not only preached the Gospel in the city, and in its immediate vicinity, but also throughout the neighbouring towns and country. A single miracle, wrought by Paul, opened the

* Concerning the subsequent history of Sergius, we know nothing authentic. If he continued in the island, he had the opportunity of seeing Barnabas again in the following year; but we have no account of Paul having again visited Cyprus; and the story of his taking Sergius with him, when he went several years after into Spain, and appointing him Bishop of Narbonne, is entitled to no credit.

way before these messengers of glad tidings. In the course of their ministry at Lystra, an object of distress presented itself in the person of an impotent man, who had been a cripple from his birth. He believed the word which the Apostles preached. Paul said to him, with a loud voice, "Stand upright on thy feet:" instantly the man sprang up, and walked. When the multitude saw this wonderful interposition on the man's behalf, they cried out in the Lycaonian dialect, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." (Acts xiv. 11.) Arrested with this idea, they sought to designate the individual deities who had honoured Lystra with their presence, and at once recognised in the stately form and solemn silent bearing of Barnabas, a personification of Jupiter; and Paul, who was the spokesman, having interested the people by his vivid, burning eloquence, they termed Mercurius, or, by the Greeks, Hermes. Captivated by this conceit, and anxious to testify their gratitude to the gods for this great condescension, the populace formed a solemn sacrificial procession, with oxen and garlands, headed by the Priests of Jupiter, and were proceeding to offer sacrifice to these supposed divine personages, who had veiled their dignity in human shape, when the Apostles, alarmed at this degrading exhibition of that idolatrous spirit, against which they had waged an eternal war, ran in among the people and addressed them. With no little difficulty, the outrageous folly of the inhabitants was stayed. But how soon did the wind change! Certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who had been following, blood-hound like, the track of the Apostles, came shortly to Lystra, and by the representation which they gave of Paul and Barnabas, the besotted inhabitants were easily persuaded to crown their former absurdity by imbruing their hands in the blood of him they a few moments previous had adored! Seizing Paul, before he could escape out of their hands, they hurled the stones at him with such effect, that he fell down as if dead; and then, with considerable alacrity, they dragged him out of the city as a mere carcass. No sooner had the mob dispersed, than the believers gathered around him, probably, for the purpose of interring his remains, when he rose up, to their great joy, and went back with them into the city. Never was there a more clear illustration of the real value and moral force of public opinion, unless we find a similar instance in the case of the Saviour when in Jerusalem, a few hours before the transactions of Gethsemane and Calvary. The crowds rent the air one day with the acclamations of "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" on the next, the city rang with the diabolical imprecations, the unearthly screams, and blood-thirsty shouts of, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" "His blood be upon us and upon our children!" "Crucify him! crucify him." One moment the men of Lystra exalted the Apostles to the names and honours of the gods; the next, they were pelted through the streets, and driven out of the city as a nuisance! So much for the vaunted sagacity, right-mindedness, benevolence, integrity, and stability, of PUBLIC OPINION! After visiting Derbe, where they preached the Gospel and instructed many, they returned, and re-visited the cities in which they had

been so shamefully treated, in order to strengthen the faith of the disciples, and to organize the churches. Then, directing their steps to Attalia, a great city south of Perga, on the coast of Pamphylia, founded by Attalus Philadelphus, King of Pergamos, they embarked for the coast of Syria, and soon arrived at Antioch, from whence they had been commended to God in this adventurous journey. On their arrival the whole church was gathered together to hear the account of their labours, successes, and prospects.

After arranging the controversy which had arisen in the church on the subject of the Mosaic rites and ceremonies, Paul resolved with Barnabas to revisit the churches which they had been instrumental in planting; the latter resolving to take his nephew Mark in company: to this Paul would not consent, on account of Mark having left them in the preceding journey. The dissension between these good men rose high, so that they separated from each other: Barnabas, in company with his nephew, went to Cyprus, his native land; and Paul made choice of Silas as his companion, and forthwith proceeded on his journey. After confirming the churches in Syria and Cilicia, he went to Derbe and Lystra, where he entered upon the ground of his former labours. This place was rendered remarkable in the history of the church, by supplying the Apostle, in Timothy, with a fellow-labourer whose services were efficient and whose person was dear to him beyond all others, and whom, at his death, he left still carrying on the work of the Gospel in this neighbourhood. With this accession to his company, Paul proceeded through the cities of that region which he had before visited; and then extended his journey far north of his former route, through Phrygia and Galatia, a province which had never before been blessed with the presence of a Christian Missionary. After labouring in his high and holy vocation there, he was inclined to go westward, to the Ionian, or true Asian, shore of the Ægean, but was withheld by an impulse which he could not resist. "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not." (Acts xvi. 6, 7.) Consequently, they continued their westward journey to the shore of the Hellespont and the Ægean, arriving within the classic region of the Troad, at the modern city of Alexandria Troas, some miles south of that glorious scene of Grecian poetical antiquity, where, thirteen hundred years previous, "Troy was."* Here they rested: while undecided as to the course which they ought to pursue, Paul had a remarkable vision, which contained a summons too distinct to be doubted; there appeared to him a vision in the night, which seemed to utter in a supplicating mood, "Come over into Macedonia and help us!" This voice was enough to rouse the ardent spirit of the Apostle, and he forthwith warned his attendants of his projects. Here also Luke† joined his company;

* Bacon's Lives of the Apostles, p. 535.

† Here they were joined by Luke, as appears from the change in the phraseology, (Acts xvi. 10,) who accompanied them to Philippi, (Acts xvi. 16, 40,) where he proba-

for it will be observed, that the historian of the Acts of the Apostles now speaks in the first person of the apostolic band; and the party, by way of the island of Samothrace and Neapolis, arrived at Philippi. Thus did Europe receive for the first time upon her soil, the impress of the foot of an Apostle of Jesus Christ.

The Jews in this city do not appear to have been numerous; at least, they had no synagogue in the town: it is here also we meet with the first instance of the heathen authorities offering any serious opposition to the Gospel. Here Paul and his companions stayed several days. Seeking on the Sabbath some place where they could in quietude worship the God of their fathers, they wandered from the busy hum of a pagan city, to a retired place on the banks of a small stream which flowed by the town; and here, in this quiet place, a few Jewish residents resorted for prayer.* Those who frequented this place of worship are represented as being women. Here Paul and his companions met them, and preached unto them the word of salvation, sent unto all the scattered race of Israel; and not to them only, but also unto the Gentiles. Among these auditors of "glad tidings of great joy," was a Jewess, named Lydia, who appears to have emigrated from Thyatira, in Lydian Asia, and now carried on in Philippi a trade in the purple dye, for which the region from which she came was celebrated, even from the time of Homer.† While listening to the "truth as it is in Jesus," her heart was opened; she professed faith in Christ, and herself was baptized with all her household. She invited the Apostles to her house, where Paul, Silvanus, Timothy, and Luke, continued during their stay in Philippi. Christianity, thus auspiciously introduced, very shortly had to encounter a storm. An incident soon occurred which brought these messengers of the cross into great notoriety. In their occasional attendance at the place of prayer, they were greatly disturbed by a young woman, who had a spirit of divination, and was maintained by some persons of that city, to whom she brought considerable gains by her "soothsaying:" this woman continually followed the Apos-

bly remained till Paul visited Macedonia, a third time; (Acts xx. 3—6;) after which he appears to have accompanied Paul till he came to Rome, (Acts xxviii. 16,) where he was when the Epistles to the Colossians, (Col. iv. 14,) and Philemon, (Phil. 24,) were written, He is not mentioned in the Epistle to the Philippians; but he was with Paul at Rome, when he wrote the second Epistle to Timothy; (2 Tim. iv. 11;) after which we have no farther notice respecting him in the sacred volume. From a comparison of Col. iv. 10, 11, 14, and Acts i. 19, it appears that he was not a Jew. See Paley's Horæ Paulinæ, p. 148. Tate's edition. (Welsh's Elements.)

* The Jews had three sorts of places for their public worship: the *temple* at Jerusalem, which was like the cathedral, or mother-church, where all sacrifices and oblations were offered, and where all males were bound three times a year personally to pay their devotion; their *synagogues*, many of which they had almost in every place, not unlike our parochial churches, where the Scriptures were read and expounded, and the people taught their duty. (Acts xv. 21.) And then they had their *proseuchæ*, or *oratories*, which were like chapels of ease to their temple and synagogues, where the people were wont to come solemnly to offer up their prayers unto heaven. They were erected without the city, in the open air, and uncovered, being large, spacious places, after the manner of *fora*, or market-places. (Dr. Cave.) See also Lardner's Works, vol. i., p. 115. 8vo. edit. London, 1831.

† See an elaborate article on dye in Kitto's Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature, *sub voce*, Purple.

tles, saying, "These are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation." All this was strictly true; but it was a testimony very *suspicious* in such a case, and was given with that subtilty and cunning which are peculiar to the great deceiver, who never bears, says Dr. A. Clarke, witness to the truth, but when he designs to injure it. He well knew, that in the Jewish law, all magic, incantations, magical rites, and dealings with familiar spirits, were strictly forbidden: he therefore bore, what was in itself, a true testimony, that he might ruin the credit of the Apostles. By such a declaration, from such a quarter, the Jews would be led to believe that the Apostles were in compact with these demons; and that the miracles which they worked, were performed by the agency of these wicked spirits; and that the whole was the effect of magic, and this would necessarily harden their hearts against the preaching of the Gospel. On the other hand, the Gentiles, finding that their own demon bore testimony to the Apostles, would naturally consider that the whole was one system; that they had nothing to learn, nothing to correct; and thus, to them, the preaching of the Apostles must be useless.

In such circumstances as these, continues Dr. Clarke, nothing could have saved the credit of the Apostles, but their dispossessing this woman of her familiar spirit, and that in the most incontestable manner: for what could have saved the credit of Moses and of Aaron, when the magicians of Egypt turned their rods into serpents, had not Aaron's rod devoured them? And what could have saved the credit of these Apostles, but the casting out this spirit of divination; with which, otherwise, both Jews and Gentiles would have believed them in compact? Paul, being grieved, and probably on these accounts, turned to the spirit, and commanded him, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her;* and he came out in the same hour; and from thenceforward the young woman was rendered totally incapable of acting the part she had before done; and the source whence her masters had derived so much gain, was now most evidently closed up. This inflamed them to madness: therefore, violently seizing the Apostles, they dragged them before the Magistrates, and accused them of turbulent and seditious designs. The Magistrates, without acquainting themselves with the merits of the case, ordered their

* The believer hopes and expects to discover a beautiful propriety in every part of the Christian scheme; and when he does not perceive it, still he infers its existence. Thus, observing that of the two kinds of demoniacal possession, our Saviour frequently exerted his power over those afflicted with the malady so characterized, while the exercise of a similar power over those visited by a spirit of divination was reserved for his Apostle to the Gentiles; one is naturally prompted to look for some mark of propriety and consistency in the arrangement. Such may, perhaps, be found by contemplating the difference of character in the ministry of Christ and of his Apostles, guided by his Spirit. It was the business of the former to *do the work* of redemption, of the latter *to instruct men in it*. The ministry of Christ, therefore, would be directed generally against all the evil and hurtful agency of the devil; the ministry of the Apostles more particularly against the propagation of falsehood. The former would naturally counteract the *works* of Satan, the latter his *words*, as conveyed through agents, such as was the rescued Pythoness. (Hinds's History of the Rise and Early Progress of Christianity, p. 211. Second Edit. London, 1846.)

clothes to be torn off,* and them to be scourged. When this was done, (and it appears to have been executed with as little mercy as justice,) they were thrust into prison; and the jailer, receiving the strictest charge to keep them safely, put them into the dungeon,† and made their feet fast in the stocks.‡ A good man can turn a prison into a sanctuary, and a den of thieves into a house of prayer.

At midnight the Apostles were overheard by their fellow-prisoners praying and singing hymns to God, who had counted them worthy to suffer thus for his name. In the midst of their joyous celebration of this persecution, while their astonished fellow-prisoners, awoke from their slumbers by this strange and unheard-of concert, were listening in amazement to this manifestation of the manner of spirit with which their new companions were disposed to meet their distresses, a mighty earthquake shook the city, and heaved the whole prison-walls on their foundations, so that all the firmly-barred doors were burst open, and, what was still more remarkable, all the chains fell from the prisoners. The jailer, awaking in the midst of this tremendous crash, concluded with himself that the prisoners had fled; and, to prevent the sentence of public justice,§ was going to lay violent hands upon himself in a fit of vexation and despair,‖ had not Paul, who had witnessed through the darkness the tremulous and frenzied actions of the miserable man, called out to him, in a clear and distinct voice, amid the dreadful noise, confusion, and dust, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here!" The Apostles embraced this opportunity of preaching Christ, in answer to the jailer's question, "What must I do to be saved?" ¶ and the result was most satisfactory. He who

* When persons were ordered to be scourged, it was customary for those who were to inflict the punishment, to pull off their clothes with violence, not minding even if they were torn in the operation. This seems to have been customary among the Jews themselves.

† See a Sermon by Dr. Adam Clarke, entitled "Salvation by Faith." Sermons, vol. iii., p. 238. 8vo. edit. London, 1830.

‡ The word "stocks" with us denotes a machine made of two pieces of timber, between which the feet of the criminals are placed, and in which they are thus made secure. The account here does not imply necessarily that they were secured precisely in this way, but that they were fastened, or secured by the feet, probably by cords, to a piece or beam of wood, so that they could not escape. It is supposed that the legs of the prisoners were bound to large pieces of wood, which not only encumbered them, but which often were so placed as to extend their feet to a considerable distance. In this condition it might be necessary for them to lie on their backs: and if this, as is probable, was on the cold ground, after their severe scourging, their sufferings must have been great.

§ Milites si amiserint custodias, ipsi in periculum deducuntur, l. xii., ff. De Custod. et Exhib. reor., tit. iii. It was customary to hold a jailer responsible for the safe keeping of his prisoners, and to subject him to the punishment due to them if he suffered them to escape.

‖ It was common and approved among the Greeks and Romans for a man to commit suicide when he was encompassed with dangers from which he could not escape. Thus Cato was guilty of self-murder in Utica; and thus, at this very place, at Philippi, Brutus and Cassius, and many of their friends, fell on their own swords, and ended their lives by suicide. The custom was thus sanctioned by the authority and example of the great: and we are not to wonder that the jailer, in the moment of alarm, should also attempt to destroy his own life. It is not one of the least benefits of Christianity, that it has proclaimed the evil of self-murder; and that it has done so much to drive it from the world. (A. Barnes's Notes.)

¶ Does this strong inquiry refer to personal or eternal safety? Is it the body or the soul that is in a state of danger? "The jailer had seen, notwithstanding the prison

had just before tyrannized over these men of God with merciless and cruel usage, now treats them with kindness and charity; he brought them out of the dungeon, and washed their stripes and wounds; and being more fully instructed in the principles of the Christian faith, the jailer and all his family were baptized.

When it was day, the Magistrates sent the officers of justice, the Serjeants, or literally, those having the rods, the Lictors, who went before the Magistrates in procession, bearing the emblems of authority, with a verbal order for the release of the two prisoners, of whose shameful treatment they appear, after a night's reflection, to be fully convinced, and also heartily ashamed. Their apparent repentance might also have been induced by the terrors of the night; for both the Greeks and the Romans were accustomed to consider an earthquake an expression of the anger of an offended Deity: conscience, therefore, would not hesitate to reproach these men in authority for this flagrant mal-usage of two friendless strangers. Paul was indignant at such an insult being added to so much deep-seated injury, and replied to these myrmidons of the law, "They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans,* and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay, verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out. And the Sergeants told these words unto the Magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans." (Acts xvi. 37, 38.) And well they might!

doors had been miraculously opened, and the bands of all the prisoners loosed, that not one of them had escaped; hence he could not feel himself in danger of losing his life on that account; and consequently it cannot be his personal safety about which he inquires. He could not but have known that these Apostles had been for some time preaching at Philippi what they called the doctrine of salvation; to this the Pythoness had alluded: 'These are the servants of the most High God which show unto us the way of salvation.' And he knew that it was for casting the demon out of this woman, that they were delivered into his custody: all this is sufficiently evident. The Spirit of God appears to have convinced his heart that *he* was *lost*, was in a state of the most imminent spiritual danger, and needed salvation; and therefore his earnest inquiry was, how he should obtain it. The answer of the Apostles shows that his inquiry was not about his personal safety, as his believing on the Lord Jesus could have had no effect upon that in his present circumstances; for as none of the prisoners had escaped, and he saw that this was the case, neither he nor his family could have been in personal danger; and if they had, the answer of the Apostles would have been as impertinent on that ground as his question was, had it referred to personal danger, when he must have been convinced that nothing of the kind existed. I conclude, therefore, from the circumstances of the Apostles, the circumstances of the jailer, his question, and their answer, that his inquiry concerned the salvation of the soul, and not the safety of his body; and, being taken in this point of view, it is the most momentous that can interest or arrest the attention of man."

* "The act of the Magistrates at Philippi was a sudden thing. The order was given without a hearing; and as soon as it was light the next morning, they sent their officers with directions that the prisoners should be released. They soon repented of what they had done; and notwithstanding the specious pretences and obnoxious charges of the masters of this damsel, that Paul and Silas had taught customs which were not lawful for them to observe, they were sensible they had gone beyond their commission, and were apprehensive of being called to an account by a higher authority to which they were subject. This order of release was sent before they had heard that these men were Romans, and whilst they knew no better than that they were mere Jews, and defended by no other privileges than those that belonged to all of that nation. When these Magistrates knew that Paul and Silas were Romans, their concern was still increased, and their own interest obliged them to render all the farther condescensions which Paul demanded." (Lardner's Works, vol. i., pp. 189, 190. 8vo. edit.)

These corrupt and mercenary conservators of the peace * had violated the sacred privilege of Roman citizenship, a privilege which always shielded its possessor from irregular tyranny, and required, throughout the Roman world, that he should never be subjected to punishment, without the most open and formal investigation of the charge; a privilege, too, the violation of which would bring down upon them the most remorseless vengeance of the Roman power.† Paul, therefore, demanded that their delivery out of prison should be as notorious as the insult, and an open vindication of their innocency. Luke the Evangelist gives a very condensed, but comprehensive, account of the injury that had been inflicted. There were three aggravating circumstances of which the Apostle bitterly complained. First, they had been beaten, contrary to the Roman law: secondly, this was *public;* the disgrace had been in the presence of the people, and the reparation ought to be as extensively made: and, thirdly, all had been perpetrated without a trial, and while they were uncondemned. Paul was well acquainted with the privileges of a Roman citizen; and at proper times, when the interests of justice and religion demanded, he did not hesitate to assert them. In all he understood and accorded with the Roman law. The Valerian statute declared, that if a citizen appealed from the Magistrate to the people, it should not be lawful for the officer to beat him with rods, or to behead him. By the Porcian law, it was expressly forbidden that a citizen should be beaten. Cicero did not hesitate to say, that the body of every Roman was inviolable, and that the Porcian edict has removed the rod from every citizen of Rome. In his celebrated oration against Verres, he has the following passage:—"A Roman citizen was beaten with rods in the forum, O Judges! where, in the mean time, no groan, no other voice of this unhappy man was heard, except the cry, 'I am a Roman citizen!' Take away this hope," says the orator, "take away this defence from the citizens of Rome; let there be no protection in the cry, 'I am a Roman citizen!' and the Prætor can inflict any punishment." Of this immunity the Apostles availed themselves, to the great chagrin and terror of the magistracy, who came to the prison, brought out their mal-treated victims, and respectfully requested them to depart. All this was fitting and proper: the

* It is not at all unlikely that the Magistrates of cities and towns, who possibly were but a few degrees above the common people, might sometimes approve of those outrages, and act a part in them: but the Presidents and Proconsuls, men of a larger genius, who had been educated at Rome, and served offices there, who were better acquainted with the Roman Constitution, had a greater charge, and were more immediately accountable to the Emperor and Senate for the observation of the edicts, and the peace of the provinces, never, or very rarely, entered into these measures; but punished such disorderly practices when they happened, and by fresh precepts endeavoured to prevent them for the future. (Lardner's Works, vol. i., p. 189.)

† The Magistrates had, by their conduct in this matter, violated three important laws, the infraction of which was in general treated with so much severity by the Roman government, that these colonial Magistrates had ample cause for the alarm with which they received the Apostle's message. 1. In punishing them without a trial, they had violated the law, which strictly forbade any citizen to be punished unheard. 2. They had also infringed the Valerian law, which forbade that any Roman citizen should be bound. And, 3. They had acted against the Sempronian, or Porcian law, which exempted a citizen from being punished with rods.

Apostles had been illegally imprisoned, and the injustice of the Magistrates ought to be condemned; the law had been violated, and the majesty of the Roman people insulted, and honour ought to be shown to both; wrong had been done to Paul and Silas, who might justly demand satisfaction and protection; this public recognition of the injury inflicted would strengthen the new converts, and convince them and the populace, that the Apostles had not been guilty of any violation of law; it would also tend to the furtherance of the Gospel, by giving a public and an undeniable proof of the innocence and good conduct of its propagators. When the cause of truth requires it, and where submission to injury might be followed by the cause of religion being degraded, we are laid under paramount obligation to seek the vindication and defence of the law, as far as such law throws its shield around the injured and the unprotected. The name and character of the Apostles belonged to the church. Laws are designed to protect an injured name, violated property, or an endangered person or life; and when that protection can only be had by an appeal, as in the case of Paul and Silas, such is neither vindictive nor improper. The two prisoners accordingly retired, and, after comforting the brethren, they departed from the city.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy went through Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessalonica, which was the largest and most important city they had yet visited in Greece. They stayed here some weeks. In Thessalonica, where the Jews were sufficiently numerous to have a synagogue, we find the usual consequence, that they were the principal opponents of the Apostle's preaching. This scene, indeed, was so invariably acted during Paul's journey through that country, that the statement we have already made, is yet more abundantly corroborated, that the Jews, on the persecution which arose after Stephen's death, sent messengers from Jerusalem, who prejudiced their countrymen everywhere against the Christians. Great numbers, especially of religious proselytes, were converted by the preaching of Paul. Their conceptions of the religion which the Apostles taught, were far more rational than the notions of the Israelites, which led them to picture the Messiah as a mere Jewish conqueror, who should restore the ancient dominion of the long-humbled Judah. Therefore, while the Greeks readily and joyfully accepted the Saviour which the Apostles proposed, the Jews scornfully rejected him, and, "moved with envy," they resorted to their old practice of stirring up a mob: they "took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people." (Acts xvii. 5.)* Paul, both as the chief of the mission, and from the

* "This is precisely the way that persecution against the truth and followers of Christ is still carried on. Some wicked man in the parish gets a wicked Attorney and a Constable to head a mob, which they themselves have raised, and, having committed a number of outrages, abusing men and women, haul the Minister of Christ to some Magistrate, who knows as little of his office as he cares for the Gospel: they there charge the outrages which themselves have committed on the Preacher and his peaceable hearers; and the peacemaker, appointed by a good King, according to the wise and excellent regulations of a sound constitution, forgetting whose minister he is,

accounts which were industriously circulated among the Jews of his former history, was the butt of their persecution. Having eluded the search of the rioters, they fell upon his host, Jason, and other believers who were in his house, and dragged them before the Magistrates, crying, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another King, one Jesus."* (Acts xvii. 7.) A more malignant and diabolical accusation could not have been made: it represented the Apostles as the enemies of Cæsar; and it amounted to a distinct charge of a treasonable conspiracy against the peace and prosperity of the Roman empire, which could not fail to bring down the most disagreeable consequences on the city. The whole of the proceedings against Jason were conducted with a moderation worthy of better and more enlightened times: the Magistrates inflicted no personal restraint, but simply took security† of Jason and his companions, that the peace would be preserved, and nothing treasonable attempted, and quietly let them go. In the stillness of the following night, Paul and Silas were conducted by the disciples to Berea.

After what has been related, it is evident that nothing effective was apparently accomplished at Thessalonica. Berea was also a city in Macedonia, about fifty miles from the former place, exactly west, being on the same line of latitude, and situated on the south of the river Astræus. On their arrival they visited the synagogue, and found the Jews of a superior character to those mean and mercenary Israelites of Thessalonica, and better able to appreciate the evangelical doctrines inculcated by Paul and Silas. They not only gave the Preachers of the Gospel a patient hearing, but, when the usual references were made to the Jewish Scriptures, they diligently and prayerfully examined the various passages, and tested their alleged coinci-

neither administers justice nor maintains truth; but, espousing the part of the mob, assumes, *ex officio*, the character of a persecutor. The Preacher is imprisoned, his hearers fined for listening to that Gospel which has not only made them wise unto salvation, but also peaceable and orderly citizens; and which would have had the same effect upon the unprincipled Magistrate, the parish Squire, and the mob, had they heard it with the same reverence and respect. Had I not witnessed," says the writer, "such scenes, and such prostitution of justice, I could not have described them." (Dr. A. Clarke.)

* "It is evident that there was no disposition, in either the people or the Rulers, to persecute the Apostles. But these wicked Jews, by means of the unprincipled wicked Lawyers, those lewd fellows of the baser sort, (they were, probably, a low kind of Lawyers, what we would call pettifoggers, or Attorneys without principle, who gave advice for a trifle, and fomented disputes and litigations among the people. The Itala Version of the Codex Bezæ, calls them *quosdam forenses*, 'certain Lawyers,') threw the subject into the form of law, making it a state question, in which form the Rulers were obliged to notice it. But they showed their unwillingness to proceed in a matter which they saw arose from malice, by letting Jason and his companions off, on bail." (Dr. A. Clarke.)

† This is an expression taken from courts, and means, that Jason and the other gave satisfaction to the Magistrates for the good conduct of Paul and Silas, or became responsible for it. Whether it was by depositing a sum of money, and by thus giving bail, is not quite clear. The sense is, that they did it in accordance with the Roman usages, and gave sufficient security for the good and peaceable deportment of the Apostles. Henman supposes that the pledge given was, that they should leave the city. Michaelis thinks, that they gave a pledge that they would no longer harbour them; but that, if they returned, they would deliver them to the Magistrates. (A. Barnes.)

dence with the person and work of Jesus Christ. The result of this candid and patient investigation was, that many of the considerate and pains-taking Jews of Berea professed their faith in the Messiah. But the heralds of the cross were not long suffered to enjoy an unmolested and tranquil possession of the field. When the news of the success of the Gospel in Berea reached Thessalonica, those inveterate enemies of all righteousness, the Jews, journeyed to Berea, for the express purpose of ferreting out the Apostles, by a new mob. In this they unhappily succeeded: Paul was sent by the brethren to Athens, Silas and Timothy for a time remained at Berea.

While the Apostle of the Gentiles remained in this city, he had to contend with more formidable and novel adversaries. Athens was the principal seat of learning, and of those arts which furnished the chief attraction of idolatry. It was the university of the Roman empire and of the world. At Athens, therefore, it might be expected, that argument, not force, would be opposed to the efforts of the Christian orator; and that on his part, as dealing with a people accessible in a high degree through their reasoning powers, the *words* more than the *works* of the Spirit were employed. Paul appears to have been literally alone; and, though avowedly a Jew, and the bearer of doctrines directly hostile to polytheism, he went to brave it in its strongest hold, and to challenge discussion in the most learned and philosophical city of Greece. Paul first preached to the Jews and devout Gentiles of the place: his discourses were so much noised abroad, as to attract the attention, not of the magistracy, but of the philosophical idlers. "Idlers," says Dr. Hinds, "because at Athens these speculators formed a body of literary loungers, and presented in the porches, and other places of public resort, a whimsical scene of fashionable relaxation, of which the amusements and conceits were metaphysical and moral discussions. Surrounded by company like this, and possibly unable, from the variety and number of questions addressed to him, to make his meaning understood, Paul was conducted, not as a criminal, for of this there is no intimation, but as the promulgator of a new system, to Mars' Hill, and was there desired publicly to explain his views. His speech accordingly bears no marks of a defence, nor was it followed up either by acquittal or condemnation, by sentence from a court, or violence from the multitude. At his mention of a resurrection from the dead, the doctrine seems to have struck his audience as so monstrous and preposterous, that he could no longer proceed for the jests and witticisms which it occasioned. His speech is doubtless, therefore, only a part of what he intended to say unto them, and what might thus have proved more generally effectual, had his auditors 'had ears to hear' him out." * The Stoics and Epicureans,† the most popular sects of the

* Hinds's History of the Rise and Early Progress of Christianity, p. 213. Second edition. London. 1846.

† Stoics were heathen philosophers, who took their name from a Greek word which signifies a porch, or portico, because Zeno, their founder, kept his school in a porch of the city of Athens. It is supposed that Zeno borrowed many of his opinions from the Jewish Scriptures; but it is certain that Socrates and Plato had taught much of them before. The Stoics generally maintained, that nature impels every man to pursue

day, the one recommending itself to the vain-glorious pride of human virtue, the other to the blind sensuality of a degenerate age, and both to its superficial views, as well as to the unrefined and practical character of the Roman, listened in contempt to what this babbling vagabond, as they called him, had to say; while others, from his preaching Jesus to them, called him an introducer of new gods. Others, perhaps, had their curiosity roused by what had been said, probably thinking the doctrine of the resurrection might in some way be reconciled with their doctrine of metempsychosis, and not as yet prepared to admit the conclusion, said, "We will hear thee again of this matter." (Acts xvii. 32.) The clamour raised by the majority was so violent, that the Apostle was obliged to desist and depart. The word, however, did not return void. Some, arrested by the former part of the discourse, and impressed with the reasonableness of the latter, became disciples. Among these was Dionysius, in whom the Gospel, thus exposed in all the weakness to which it could possibly be reduced by the absence of every worldly help or recommendation, achieved its proudest conquest over the human mind on the philosophic soil of the fellow-countrymen of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.*

From Athens the Apostle went to Corinth, and, as usual, opened his mission in the synagogue, where at first he met with considerable success. The Corinth of which we read in the New Testament was comparatively a modern city, having been rebuilt and established as a Roman colony, and peopled with freedmen from Rome, by the dictator Cæsar, a little before his assassination. Although the soil was

whatever appears to him to be good. According to them, self-preservation and defence is the first law of animated nature. All animals necessarily derive pleasure from those things which are suited to them; but the first object of pursuit is not pleasure, but conformity to nature. Every one, therefore, who has a right discernment of what is good, will be chiefly concerned to conform to nature in all his actions and pursuits. This is the origin of moral obligation. With respect to happiness or good, the Stoical doctrine was altogether extravagant: they taught that all external things are indifferent, and cannot affect the happiness of man; that pain, which does not belong to the mind, is not evil; and that a wise man will be happy in the midst of torture, because virtue itself is happiness. Of all the sects of the ancient philosophers, it is said that the Stoics came nearest to the Christians; and that, not only with respect to their strict regard to moral virtue, but also on account of their moral principles: insomuch that Jerome affirms, that in many things they agree with us. They asserted the unity of the divine Being, the creation of the world by the Λογος, or "Word," the doctrine of providence, and the conflagration of the universe. They believed in the doctrine of fate, which they represented as no other than the will and purpose of God, and held that it had no tendency to looseness of life. Epicureans were the disciples of Epicurus, a Greek philosopher, who flourished about A.M. 3700. This sect maintained, that the world was formed, not by God, nor with any design, but by the fortuitous concourse of atoms. They denied that God governs the world, or in the least condescends to interfere with creatures below; they denied the immortality of the soul, and the existence of angels; they maintained that happiness consisted in pleasure; but some of them placed this pleasure in the tranquillity and joy of the mind, arising from the practice of moral virtue, and which is thought by some to have been the true principle of Epicurus; others understood him in the gross sense, and placed all their happiness in corporeal pleasure. His system found many followers in Rome, among whom Celsus, Pliny the Elder, and Lucretius were the most eminent. The word "Epicurean" is used, at present, for an indolent, effeminate, and voluptuous person, who only consults his private and particular pleasure; and especially one who is devoted to the enjoyments of the table. (Dr. Henderson's Theol. Dict.)

* Evans's Scripture Biography, p. 284.

too rocky to be fertile, and the territory very limited, Corinth again became a great and wealthy city in a short time, especially as the Roman Proconsuls made it the seat of government for southern Greece, which was now called the province of Achaia. In earlier times, Corinth had been celebrated for the great wealth of its temple of Venus, which had a gainful traffic of a most dishonourable kind, with the numerous merchants resident there, supplying them with harlots under the form of religion. The same phenomena, no doubt, reappeared in the late and Christian age. The little which is said in the New Testament, seems to indicate a wealthy and luxurious community, prone to impurity of morals: nevertheless, all Greece was so contaminated, that we may easily overcharge the accusation against Corinth.*

While at Corinth, the Apostle was rejoined by Timothy, whom he had despatched from Athens to Thessalonica, that he might comfort the brethren who were then in much conflict and trouble. Timothy brought him such a melancholy account of their sufferings, as induced Paul to write a letter to that church. It is remarkable that the Apostle addresses the Christian community in that city, as converted Heathens; a plain proof that the Jews who had embraced the truth were but few in number, and destitute of influence. The brethren were also suffering at the hands of the Heathen, whom, together with the civil authorities, the Jews had incited against them. The Apostle delivered to these Thessalonian Christians, that word of comfort† which is efficacious and salutary in proportion to the severity of that affliction which has called it forth, and probably, while consoling the spirits of others, he was enabled also to derive consolation himself. Paul, therefore, was alone at Corinth; but an event had lately happened in Rome, which provided him with an active and able assistant. The Emperor Claudius had lately ordered all Jews to quit the capital; and there is some evidence that the edict was caused by the increasing progress of Christianity. The government was always extremely jealous of what is called *foreign* superstitions. It is more than probable, that the Jews in Rome would put themselves forward to suppress the new doctrines; and the Romans, who looked upon the whole nation with scorn, would see nothing in this opposition but a dispute between two sects of a contemptible religion. If the Jews had recourse to the same turbulent measures in Rome, which we have seen them practise in Thessalonica and Berea, it was quite necessary for the government to interfere; and a succession of disturbances of this kind, coupled with the dissemination of Christianity, would best illustrate the expression of Suetonius,‡ where

* Kitto's Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature.

† "It was now that he wrote the first of those apostolical Epistles, which the church for eighteen centuries has valued among her richest treasures; and it is no small honour to the Thessalonian converts that they were selected to receive the communication." (Dr. E. Burton.)

‡ "Judæos impulsore CHRESTO assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit." (Suet. Claud., sect. xxv., p. 469. Edit. Græv., 1708.) This edict is not mentioned by Josephus, but is recorded as above by Suetonius, the Roman historian. Who this *Chrestos* was, is not known. It *might* have been a foreign Jew, who raised tumults on some occasion of which we have no knowledge; as the Jews, in all heathen cities, were

he speaks of the expulsion of the Jews. Those of them who had embraced Christianity, would of course be involved in the same sentence; and perhaps the former decrees against foreign superstitions would now be directed specially against the Christians. It is possible, that this may have been the meaning of the charge brought by the Jews of Thessalonica, that Paul and his companions were acting contrary to the decrees of the Emperor; (Acts xvii. 7;) and if Greece were at this time more than usually filled by Jews, who had been forced to leave Rome, they would be particularly bitter against the Christians, who were in some measure the cause of the edict being passed.* Among those who had thus been obliged to leave Rome was Aquila. His history has given rise to many inventions among the early writers, and perhaps we ought to receive nothing concerning him, except what we learn from the pen of Luke and Paul. Some represent him as having been a disciple of Simon Magus, who had probably spread his doctrines in Rome before that period. The sequel of the story, which represents Aquila as having been converted to Christianity by Zacchæus, is utterly unworthy of attention. We have no authentic account of the publican subsequent to the crucifixion of our Lord; and it is obvious, that his name very early became a fruitful source of apocryphal absurdity and superstition. It is unknown whether Aquila was a Christian when he took shelter in Corinth, or whether he was converted by the Apostle after his arrival. He suffered for the faith which he professed; and, according to Theophylact, he, together with his wife Priscilla, was martyred in the reign of Nero.†

For a time the ministry of Paul was pursued without hinderance. With regard to the necessaries of life, the Apostle "was chargeable to no man," but "laboured with his own hands" to procure them. The diligent pursuit of his own vocation by no means prevented him from appearing on the Sabbath in the synagogue, as a teacher of the word. "He persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." It appears, however, that Paul did not, during the first part of his ministrations,

greatly prone to excitements and insurrections. Or, it *may* be, that Suetonius, little acquainted with Jewish affairs, mistook this for the name of "Christ," and supposed that he was Leader of the Jews. This explanation has much plausibility; for, (1.) Suetonius could scarcely be supposed to be intimately acquainted with the affairs of the Jews. (2.) There is every reason to believe, that before this, the Christian religion was preached at Rome. (3.) It would produce there, as everywhere else, great tumults and contention among the Jews. (4.) Claudius, the Emperor, might suppose that such tumults endangered the peace of the city, and resolve to remove the cause at once, by the dispersion of the Jews. (5.) A Roman historian might easily mistake the true state of the case; and while they were contending *about* Christ, he might suppose that it was *under* him, as a Leader, that these tumults were excited. All that is material here, however, is the fact in which Luke and Suetonius agree, that the Jews were expelled from Rome during his reign. (A. Barnes.) "Veteres Gentiles per contumeliam *Chrestum* et *Chrestianos* pro Christum et Christianos dixerunt." (P. Pithæus.)

* Burton's Lectures on the Eccles. Hist. of the First Century.

† Aquila was a native of Pontus. We meet him first at Pontus after leaving Rome. Then he goes to Ephesus; (Acts xviii. 18, 19;) afterwards we again find him at Rome; (Rom. xvi. 3;) and, finally, at Ephesus. (2 Tim. iv. 19.) Paul speaks of the kindly feeling entertained for them by "all the churches of the Gentiles." (Rom. xvi. 4.) All which particulars are important, as illustrative of the facility and frequency of communication that might be enjoyed among the early Christians.

very fully and energetically proclaim the leading doctrines of the Gospel; but when Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, he "was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ." The presence of his associates animated him, and the certainty of help in his great and hallowed work, urged him onward in enterprise and zeal, in making Christ known. The unbelieving Jews speedily raised their wonted opposition; and what they could not overcome by argument and force of reason, they endeavoured to carry by noise and clamour, mingled with blasphemy and reviling, the last refuge of an impotent and sinking cause. Paul, as he had already done at Pisidian Antioch, formally renounced all further connexion with them, and, shaking his garments, the expressive gesture of an Oriental, as if to free himself from their very dust, he exclaimed, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." (Acts xviii. 6.) Thus he abandoned them to that judgment of God, which their blindness of unbelief was bringing upon them; and, after a scanty harvest, which, however, included one, some say two, Rulers of the synagogue, he quitted the field of the circumcision, and betook himself to the uncircumcision. Accordingly he left the Jews, and went to the house of Justus, a religious friend, "whose house joined hard to the synagogue," and there he abode. Not all the Jews were involved in this condemnation. One of the most eminent men among them, Crispus,* either at that time or formerly, the ruling Elder, professed his faith in Jesus, notwithstanding the unpopularity of the new doctrine. Along with Crispus, his whole family were baptized. Gaius and Stephanas also, with their several households, embraced the truth and were baptized; and, to encourage the Apostle, amid the frequent ebullitions of malice and ingratitude with which he was annoyed, and the restless attempts and incessant machinations of these enemies of all righteousness to impede and render abortive the efforts of Paul, our Lord appeared to him in a vision, and told him that, notwithstanding the comparatively small success which had followed his ministry, there was a great harvest forthcoming, that he had "much people in that city; and that he was not to be afraid of his adversaries, for that he himself would stand by and protect him." (Acts xviii. 9, 10.)

The Jews did not long confine their opposition to the Apostle to simple acts of verbal hostility and abuse. Witnessing the hated heresy making rapid advances, notwithstanding the contempt in which it was generally held, they resolved that more violent measures should be adopted to resist its progress. Deprived of political power, and unable to meet the exigencies of the case by physical violence, they were compelled to proceed under forms of law. They were aware, that any attempt on the part of the Jews to raise a popular commotion against the strangers, would only bring upon them the overwhelming and unsparing vengeance of their Roman Rulers, who hesitated not to punish severely all who defied their forms of laws for the sake of persecution, or to accomplish any private

* According to tradition, Crispus was afterwards Bishop of Ægina. (Constitut. Apost., vii. 16.)

end. Least of all would a class of people so peculiar and so disliked as the Jews, be allowed to perpetrate such acts with impunity, especially as the whole nation had so recently been swept out of the imperial city, by the besom of regal displeasure. All these circumstances suggested to the persecutors the necessity of caution. They therefore apprehended Paul as a violator of religious order, and took him before the highest Roman tribunal, that of the Proconsul.

The Proconsul of Achaia, holding his supreme seat of justice in Corinth, the capital of that Roman province, was Lucius Junius Gallio, who is supposed to have been the brother of the celebrated Seneca. The name by which he is known to Roman writers, as well as in the apostolic history, was not his original family designation, and therefore gives the reader no idea of that relationship. His patronymic was Marcus Annæus Novatus Seneca, which appellation he exchanged for his later one, on being adopted by Lucius Junius Gallio, a noble Roman, who, being destitute of children, adopted, according to a common custom of the imperial city, one of a family that had already given promise of a reward to those who should take its offspring as theirs. Gallio is mentioned by his brother in terms of high commendation: his character, however, is not treated so favourably by other writers.* Though the Proconsul gave no proof that he was impressed with the doctrines of the Gospel, his government was perhaps not unfriendly to their propagation. In almost every case of opposition with which the Apostles had to contend, we have hitherto found the Jews to have been the first and principal movers; and the Roman authorities either refused to interest themselves in such matters, or gave a tacit consent to the Jews indulging their malice. The Apostles would, therefore, be safer in a Roman or Grecian town, than in one which was more immediately subject to Jewish influence; and Corinth, which was the capital of a province, and the residence of a Proconsul, was, perhaps, less likely than any other town in Greece to tolerate disturbances excited by a foreign religion. This may be one reason why Paul stayed so much longer in Corinth than he had hitherto done in any other place upon his travels. He remained there not less than eighteen months.†

* Taciti Annales, lib. vi., cap. 3; lib. xv., cap. 73. It was to this Gallio, that Seneca dedicated his books, De Ira, and De Vita Beata; he is also described by the philosopher, as a man of the most amiable mind and manners: "Quem nemo non parum amat, etiam qui amare plus non potest; nemo mortalium uni tam dulcis est, quam hic omnibus: cum interim tauta naturalis boni vis est, uti artem simulationemque non redoleat." (Vide Senec., Præfat. ad Natural., quæst. 4.) Statius composed an ode on the birthday of Lucan, in which, in a few words, he says much in his praise:—

"Lucanum potes imputare terris:
Hoc plus quam Senecam dedisse mundo,
Aut dulcem generâsse Gallionem."
Stat. Sylvar., lib. ii., cap. 7, vers. 30.

"You may consider nature as having made greater efforts in producing Lucan, than it has done in forming Seneca, or even the amiable Gallio." According to Eusebius, he committed suicide before the death of Seneca. (Junius Gallio, frater Senecæ, egregius declamator, propria se manu interfecit.) But Tacitus certainly speaks of him as being alive after that event; (Annal., xv., cap. 73;) and Dion. Cassius states, that he was put to death by order of Nero.

† Burton's Lectures on the Eccles. Hist. of the First Century, p. 187.

No sooner had Gallio entered upon his proconsulate, than he was addressed by the Jewish residents of the place in behalf of their plot against Paul, naturally supposing that this would be the best time for them to endeavour to influence the new Governor, when he was commencing his administration, and doubtless anxious to please the numerous classes of his subjects. But they wofully mistook their man. Gallio had no disposition to curry favour with the populace by any such abuse of power. When the Jews brought Paul before his tribunal, with the accusation, "This *fellow* persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law," (Acts xviii. 13,) the Proconsul, before Paul could open his mouth in reply, answered, "If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters." * (Acts xviii. 14, 15.) With this reply he commanded his officers to clear the court. But certain of the townspeople, vexed at the scandalous proceeding of the Jews, seized upon Sosthenes,† one of the rulers of the Jewish consistory, a man active and busy in this insurrection, inasmuch as he was the regular legal chief of the Jews, and gave him a beating in the court. Gallio took no notice of the action, though confessedly a violation of the dignity of his tribunal; a plain proof that he was indignant at the Jews, and disposed to sympathize with the Apostle. Not long after this, Paul quitted Corinth, leaving behind him a flourishing church, the peace of which was secured by the presence of the Roman Governor, keeping, as it did, the Jews under too strict control for raising those persecuting riots of which they were guilty in other places. He proceeded on his way to Syria, touching at Ephesus, where he promised a second visit, and again at Cæsarea, whence he went up and saluted the church, and arrived at Antioch, after a tour of about four years, during which, at the expense of much personal peril and suffering, he had spread the

* As if he had said, "The Roman laws give religious liberty to Jews and Greeks; but if controversies arise among you on these subjects, decide them among yourselves, or dispute about them as much as you please." A better answer could not be given by man; and it was highly becoming the acknowledged meekness, gentleness, and benevolence of this amiable person. He concluded, that the state had no right to control any man's religious opinion; *that* was between the object of his worship and his own *conscience*; and therefore, he was not authorized to intermeddle with subjects of this nature, which the law left to every man's private judgment. Had all the Rulers of the people in every country acted as this sensible and benevolent Roman, laws against liberty of conscience, concerning religious persecution, would not be found to be, as they now are, blots and disgraces on the statute-books of almost all the civilized nations of Europe. (Dr. A. Clarke.)

† As Sosthenes is termed the Chief Ruler in the synagogue, it is probable that he succeeded Crispus in that office, and that he subsequently embraced Christianity, though at present he was adverse both to its doctrines and faith. Doubts by some have been entertained whether Sosthenes appeared upon this occasion as a friend or enemy of the Apostle. If he were the former, it is probable that he was the Sosthenes who was afterwards the companion of Paul, (Tillemont Memoires, tom. i., p. 586,) and who appears as taking an interest in the Corinthian church, so that, during the residence of Paul at Corinth, two presidents of the Synagogue were converted by his preaching. Caius, also, who, as well as Stephanas and Crispus, was baptized by Paul himself, was probably a person of some note, or he would not have been so distinguished; but it is uncertain whether he is the same with Caius the Macedonian, who, according to some traditions, was Bishop of Thessalonica.

word of the Gospel through the most civilized part of the world, and had founded churches, which had already multiplied into others. Thus terminated the second great missionary tour of the Apostle of the Gentiles.

The state of Judea at this period is worthy of attention. A person was now rising into importance, who might have excited in the Jews some feelings of national attachment, and who lived to see the final misfortunes of his unhappy country. Agrippa the younger, son of Herod Agrippa, who was recently dead, came into notice. The Emperor Claudius, though well disposed towards him, did not choose to bestow upon him any of his father's territories. It was not long before his uncle Herod died, who was Sovereign of a small district called Chalcis, and Agrippa, who was now twenty-one years of age, obtained this from the Emperor: this sovereignty also gave him the superintendence of the temple, with its treasury, and the power of appointing the High Priests. The dates and successions of the Roman Procurators, at this period, are involved in considerable obscurity: it is probable, however, that when Tiberius Alexander was removed, (an exceedingly unpopular Procurator, under whom the Jews were very turbulent, and the city of Jerusalem, and the whole country of Judea, a scene of disorder and bloodshed,) the three districts of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee were committed to two Governors, Cumanus and Felix.* The usual consequences of a divided Government, jealousy, rapacity, and oppression, followed. The two officers, who rivalled each other in pillaging their subjects, either overlooked the crimes which were committed, or suffered the criminals to proceed, that they might fall upon them with more signal severity. We read of twenty thousand Jews being killed in a riot by Cumanus.† Every part of the country was infested with robbers and assassins; and when Luke despatches the visit of Paul to Jerusalem ‡ in a few words, we can easily explain why the visit itself, as well as the description, occupied but a short time. (Acts xviii. 22.) The aspect of Judea must have caused great pain to the Apostle, even without reference to that spirit of prophecy by which he probably foresaw the still greater evils which were impending over his unhappy country. Fortunately his mind had sufficient occupation without dwelling upon these misfortunes; and when he once more took leave of his countrymen, it was to resume those labours to which he now felt his life was to be devoted.§

From Jerusalem, Paul went down to Antioch; and here he would find consolation for the trials he had recently undergone. Under the government of Quadratus, who about this time was appointed President, the province of Syria enjoyed comparative rest. The presence

* Tacit. Annal., lib. xii., cap. 54; Joseph. Antiq., lib. xx., cap. 6, 7; Joseph. de Bell. Jud., lib. ii., cap. 12.

† Joseph. Antiq., lib. xx., cap. v., sect. 3.

‡ Jerusalem is not mentioned in the authorized version; but this is a common form of speech in the Evangelists, Jerusalem being always meant when the phrase "go up" is adopted. The word *αναβαινω*, "to go up," is often used absolutely to signify, "to go up to Jerusalem." See John vii. 8, 10; xii. 20; Acts xxiv. 11.

§ Burton's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, &c., p. 194.

of a Roman force kept the Jews at Antioch in peace, and the Christians were unmolested. Here the Gospel prospered. Roman Catholic writers attribute its success to the long residence of Peter, who, they assert, not only founded it, but occupied the episcopal chair for some years: this assertion is untrue, and has no support whatever from holy writ. After remaining some time in Antioch, he went in regular order over the regions of Galatia and Phrygia confirming the disciples: he then went down to the western shore, and visited Ephesus, according to the promise which he had previously made. Events important to the weal of Christianity had taken place during his absence. An Alexandrine Jew, named Apollos,* of eminent biblical learning, and endued with great powers of eloquence, had arrived in Ephesus, where he distinguished himself as a teacher. His evangelical training had been very deficient. He knew something of the doctrines which John the Baptist had taught, but nothing of the leading truths of Christ and his Apostles. He was brought under the notice of Aquila and Priscilla, whom Paul had left in Ephesus during his former visit, from whom Apollos heard, with deep interest and satisfaction, of the "glorious Gospel of the blessed God," which he cordially embraced, and diligently taught. After Paul had preached three months in the synagogue, he was obliged, as at Antioch and Corinth, to abandon the Jews to their fate, and, withdrawing his disciples, he held disputations on the word of God in the school of a Sophist, named Tyrannus. The whole province of Asia, both Greeks and Jews, were thus for two years instructed in "words whereby they might be saved." Numerous circumstances of an interesting character occurred during Paul's long residence in Ephesus, the result of which was, that the word of God mightily grew and prevailed.

Having been a resident at Ephesus upwards of two years, Paul began to think of revisiting former fields of missionary enterprise, especially those Grecian cities of Europe, which presented scenes to him so eventful and glorious. He contemplated a journey into Macedonia and Achaia, and then to see Jerusalem; and when communicating these plans to his friends at Ephesus, he remarked, in conclusion, "And after that I must also see Rome." He sent before him into Macedonia his former assistant, Timothy, and another helper not before mentioned, Erastus, subsequently alluded to as the Treasurer of the city of Corinth. Paul remained for a time in Ephesus, until some other preliminaries might be adjusted. During this delay, an incident occurred which threatened for a time to terminate both his work and his life.

The success which attended the preaching of the Gospel in Ephesus gave rise to enemies of another kind, whose assaults were even more lasting and fatal than those of the Jews. The Ephesians were exceedingly jealous of the honour of their tutelar deity, and their

* Apollos, a name contracted for Apollonius, as Epaphras for Epaphroditus, and Artemas for Artemonius. Of this Apollonius mention is made in 1 Cor. i. 12, and iii. 5; where Paul speaks of the labour he underwent in the instruction of the Corinthians. (1 Cor. iv. 6; xvi. 12.) The Jews of Alexandria were eminent for biblical knowledge.

national religion: consequently a powerful feeling came into operation, when the rapid and mighty encroachments of Christianity caused a manifest diminution in the number of pagan worshippers. From the architect and the sculptor, whose temples and statues became the wonder of the world, down to the lowest shopkeeper, who supplied materials for sacrifice, there was a long catalogue of interested persons, more or less important individually, but numerically of the greatest moment, whose fame and livelihood depended upon the maintenance of polytheism. The idolaters of Ephesus heeded not a rush whether Diana or Apollo were worshipped: Christianity was ruinous to them all. The preaching of the Apostle struck an awkward blow at the foundation of a very thriving business, which was carried on in manufacturing certain curious images or shrines of the goddess Diana of the Ephesians,* which became of no value to those who believed the doctrines which Paul taught, "that they be no gods which are made with hands." (Acts xix. 26.) Demetrius, therefore, spake truly, and unfolded the just cause of the tumult, when he said, "Ye know that by this craft we have our wealth." He showed the silversmiths that their "craft was in danger," who with one accord raised a great outcry in the usual form of commendation of the established idolatry of their city, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" This noise attracting attention, every one who distinguished the words was led, by a kind of patriotic impulse, to join in the cry, and swell the clamour. The whole city was in an uproar. The demagogues, who have nothing to lose in popular outbreaks, doubtless reaped a harvest in Ephesus. The general facts of the case would be known to few, save that the great object of the tumult was to inflict some injury upon the Christians: the interested party cared only for the money which they earned by making silver shrines; and because these men were in danger of losing their gains, the Apostles and their associates must be put to death. The mob fell upon Gaius and Aristarchus, two travelling companions of Paul, and dragged them to the theatre, whither the whole multitude rushed at once, as a desirable *arena* for any act of confusion and folly they might choose to commit. Paul proposed to enter and address the assembly; but his friends, exercising more prudence and practical wisdom, knowing that such a concourse is no more under the control of reason than so many ramping lions, prevented him, where he would doubtless have been torn to pieces before he could have opened

* The Diana of the Romans is a goddess known under various modifications, and with almost incompatible attributes. As the tutelar deity of Ephesus, in which character alone she concerns us, she was undoubtedly a representative of the same power presiding over conception and birth, which was adored in Palestine under the name of "Ashtoreth." Her earliest image, which was said to have fallen from heaven, was probably very rude; and, to judge from its representation on ancient coins, little more than a head with a shapeless trunk, supported by a staff on each side. The later image, with the full development of attributes, is a pantheon of Asiatic and Egyptian deities. Some of the most significant are, the turreted head, like that of Cybele, the nimbus behind it representing the moon; the zodiacal signs of the bull, the twins, and the crab on her bosom; below them, two garlands, one of flowers and the other of acorns; the numerous breasts; the lions, stags, and cows in various parts; the bees and flowers on the sides, &c. (Kitto.)

his mouth.* Some of the "chief" Magistrates of the province, who were amicably disposed towards him, hearing of his rash intentions, requested that he would not adventure himself in the theatre. The outcry continued. "Some cried one thing, and some another; for the whole assembly was confused, for the more part knew not wherefore they were come together." The Roman Government had not taken up the question; and a popular insurrection, from whatever quarter it came, was always a thing to be repressed. The Recorder of the city came forward, and, having hushed the people, who had some reverence for the lawful authorities, he reminded them, that, since no one doubted the respect of the citizens of Ephesus for the goddess Artemis, there was no occasion for such a disturbance to demonstrate a fact which every one knew. He told them that the men, against whom they were raising this tumult, had been neither robbers of temples,† nor blasphemers of the goddess; so that if Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen had anything justly to urge against these men, they had a remedy at hand, in a proper course of law; and that all of them were liable to be called to account for this manifest breach of Roman legislation, and this open defiance of the majesty of the imperial Government. This hint appears to have had due weight; for they dreaded the thought of giving any occasion to the remorseless Government of the province to impose a fine upon them, an act of retributive justice which would most unhesitatingly have been enforced. All quietly dispersed. We cannot, however, close the affair of the Ephesian riot, without recalling to remembrance the wicked malignity and indomitable hatred of the Jews against their fellow-worshippers of the one true God. They actually joined the Gentiles, and took part with the idolaters. Thus did they throw away the mask of their horrible hypocrisy, and in the blindness of their rage discover to the whole world that their vaunted zeal for God was nothing more than a base worldly-minded ambition; that the setting up his glory was a mere pretence to set up themselves. The guilt of this unnatural and impious confederacy was augmented by the great and public miracles which Paul wrought in attestation of the authority of his mission. Even handkerchiefs

* "It has been disputed whether Paul were not at this time made to fight with beasts in the amphitheatre at Ephesus; and his own words, (1 Cor. xv. 32,) as well as ecclesiastical traditions, have been quoted to maintain the affirmative. On the whole, I am inclined to reject the story. Had the attempt been made, he would probably have pleaded his Roman citizenship; and Luke, who has described the riot with some detail, would hardly have omitted such an interesting narrative. We have, however, his own evidence for saying, that the latter part of his residence in Ephesus was attended with personal danger. (1 Cor. xv. 30; 2 Cor. i. 8, 10; Rom. xvi. 4.)" (Dr. Burton.)

† Without controversy, this is one of the most unfortunate passages in our English translation: (Acts xix. 37:) where the original ἱερόσυλοι is expressed by "robbers of churches." Whoever thought of applying the English word "church" to anything but a Christian assembly, or Christian place of worship? Why is this phrase put in the mouth of a heathen officer, addressing a heathen assembly about persons charged with violating the sanctity of heathen places of worship? Such a building as a church, devoted to the worship of the true God, was not known till more than a century after this time, in the reign of Constantine, who first erected buildings consecrated especially to the worship of the Christians' God; and the Greek word, which enters into the composition of the term in the sacred text, was *never* applied to a Christian place of worship. (Bacon.)

and tunics were taken from his body to the sick, and they were healed. But the wicked and adulterous generation which demanded a sign, would not believe it when it was given. So mightily, however, in despite of interested opposition, prevailed the effect of these wonders among the Gentiles, that many who in this city of the goddess of necromancy had practised that infernal art, came forward and publicly burnt their magical books.*

Soon after the tumult, Paul took solemn leave of the church at Ephesus, and pursued his missionary tour by way of Troas to Philippi, where he appears to have resided some time, and from which, as his head-quarters, he made extensive excursions into the surrounding districts, penetrating even to Illyricum on the eastern shore of the Adriatic sea. (Rom. xv. 19.) From Philippi he went to Corinth, where he abode three months, and then returned to the former place, having been frustrated in his design of proceeding through Syria to Jerusalem by the malice of the Jews. Sailing from Philippi, he came to Troas, where he joined his companions whom he had sent before. These were youthful Ministers who rallied round the Apostle, by whom they were taught to become laborious and useful Pastors of the New Testament. The school of Paul was well fitted to train intelligent and hardy Christian soldiers. The constant teaching of him who was well acquainted with labours, with stripes, with imprisonments, with deaths; who had been scourged, stoned, shipwrecked; who was in continual danger on every side, and in hunger and thirst, in watchings, in fastings, in cold and nakedness; (2 Cor. xi. 23, &c.;) who, on the other hand, was rapt to the third heaven, and had unutterable things revealed to him; could not fail to foster habits of hardihood, and promote spiritual intelligence. The names of most of them appear again on occasions of service to the church; and Timothy and Titus, Mark and Luke, shine conspicuous among her first and greatest master-builders.

From Troas he journeyed on foot to Assos, and from thence he proceeded by sea to Miletus.† Not having time to go to Ephesus, he invited the Elders of the church to meet him there, which meeting would not fail to be a sorrowful one, from the assurance which Paul gave them that they would never see his face again. His farewell charge was of a most tender and energetic character. Having commended them to God, they accompanied him to the vessel, and he left them. At Tyre another affecting scene took place. After a week's sojourn, he was escorted out of the city by men, women, and children to the sea-shore, where all knelt down and prayed, and, after giving the last embrace, Paul returned on board. No sooner had he set his face to go to Jerusalem, than his approaching imprison-

* Evans's Scripture Biography, p. 352.

† The Apostle had intended to take the direct course for Jerusalem; but the discovery of a secret design against him among the Jews, led him to proceed by this circuitous route. By land through Macedonia, then by sea from Philippi to Troas; (Acts xx. 3—6;) then to Assos on foot; (xx. 13;) and from Assos to Mytilene, (xx. 14,) and then to Miletus. (xx. 15.) From Miletus he proceeded by sea to Tyre, (xxi. 3,) then to Cæsarea, (xxi. 8,) and from thence to Jerusalem, (xxi. 17,) where he arrived during the feast of Pentecost. (xx. 16.)

ment there, as an event momentous to her interests, was announced to the church by the Spirit. As he proceeded from city to city, the Prophets of the several churches intimated to him, that bonds and afflictions were awaiting him in Jerusalem. "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." (Acts xx. 22, 23.) When he arrived at Cæsarea, he lodged in the house of Philip the Evangelist, one of the seven Deacons that were first set apart by the Apostles, who had four daughters all endued with the gift of prophecy. During his stay in this place, Agabus, a Christian Prophet, came from Judea, who, taking Paul's girdle, bound with it his own hands and feet,* and asserted that by this external symbol, the Holy Ghost did signify and declare, that Paul would be thus treated by the Jews at Jerusalem, and delivered into the hands of the Gentiles. (Acts xxi. 11.) All passionately besought him that he would direct his course to another place; but he, being grieved at their affectionate dissuasives, inasmuch as they added to the poignancy of his sorrow, declared that he was willing, and, if needs be, resolved, not only to be imprisoned, but also to die, at Jerusalem for the sake of Christ. Finding his resolution immovably fixed, they importuned him no further. At length he reached the fatal scene of the fulfilment of the prediction.

The prediction of Agabus, Dr. Burton justly observes, is worthy of being remarked, because it appears plain from other passages, that, though gifted to a high degree with the spirit of prophecy, Paul had not yet received a clear revelation of what was awaiting him. He had been able to foretell to his disciples at Thessalonica and Ephesus, the grievous errors which would, in a few years, and after his own decease, be productive of great evils in the church. He even knew that his converts at Ephesus would never see his face again; and yet it was plain, that it was not till his arrival in Judea that he knew the full extent, and the immediate approach, of the trial which he was to undergo. When he wrote to the Romans, he fully expected that he should see them shortly, and that after having been to Jerusalem, he should be at liberty to travel in any direction. But if there could be any doubt upon this point, it would be removed by the language which he used to the Ephesian Elders. (Acts xx. 22, 23.) The fact is curious, as illustrating the nature of these preternatural illuminations; and so far from making us think less of the Apostle's inspiration, it ought greatly to strengthen our conviction, that there was no delusion in these spiritual gifts, and that Paul spake according to truth when he said, "There are diversities of operations,

* It was common for the Prophets to perform actions which were emblematic of the events which they predicted, to render such prediction, if possible, more forcible and impressive. Thus Jeremiah was directed to bury his girdle by the Euphrates, to denote the approaching captivity of the Jews. (Jer. xiii. 4.) Thus he was directed to make bands and yokes, and to put them around his neck, as a sign to Edom and Moab, &c. (xxvii. 2, 3.) Thus the act of the potter was emblematical of the destruction that was coming upon the nation of the Jews. (xviii. 4.) So Isaiah walked naked and barefoot, as a sign of the captivity of Egypt and Ethiopia. (Isai. xx. 3, 4, compare Ezek. iv., xii., &c.)

but it is the same God which worketh all in all; and all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." (1 Cor. xii. 6, 11.) An impostor would never have laid claim to imperfect inspiration. If the whole had been a contrivance, Paul, and not Agabus, would have been the principal Prophet. He would never have acknowledged that he was ignorant of the fate that awaited him; nor would he have left it to inferior pretenders in the different towns through which he passed, to disclose by degrees what personally concerned himself.* Those individuals who are surprised that Paul's foreknowledge was limited, can have paid but little attention to the question of prophecy. Inspiration cannot be separated from the notion of a superintending and controlling power; if it could, or if the extent of the foreknowledge depended upon the will of the person possessing it, it would cease to be inspiration: and if we proceed to say that Paul was not inspired because he did not know everything, we are, in fact, deciding what is best for God to do; and we are judging by ordinary and human rules of that which by the very hypothesis is extraordinary and superhuman. If a person deny the existence of prophecy, he must be met by other arguments; but if he allow it to be possible, it bespeaks not only a more humble, but a more philosophical, mind, to judge of prophecy by what is revealed. Inspiration would not be given at all, but for wise and good purposes; and he who thinks that Paul's foreknowledge ought to have exceeded that of Agabus, should be prepared to prove, that the counsels of God would have succeeded better, if this had been the case.†

The day after Paul's arrival in Jerusalem, he and his company went to the house of James the Apostle, where the Elders of the church were gathered together. The brethren hailed his arrival with great joy, to whom he gave a particular account of the manner in which God had blessed his ministry among the Gentiles. This very success rendered it necessary that they should suggest to him measures of caution. They told him that he was now come to a place where there were many thousands of Jewish converts, who all retained great zeal and veneration for the law of Moses, who had been informed, that he had instructed those of the Jews who had embraced Christianity to renounce circumcision and other ceremonies of Judaism; and that, as soon as the people hear of his arrival, they will doubtless hasten to learn what he had to say for himself. The fact is, Paul's fundamental doctrine of justification by faith only, had been partly misunderstood through ignorance and carelessness, but much more generally misrepresented through malice, as requiring from the Jews the abandonment of the law of Moses. The Asiatic Jews, who had come up in great numbers to the feast of Pentecost, would at the sight of him immediately take fire, and industriously spread far and wide against him a report with which they had already,

* "This is another proof that the prophetic spirit was not at his command, but dealt out to him by measure; and its suggestions perfectly distinguishable from other, even the strongest impressions on the mind." (Dr. Hinds.)

† Burton's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, p. 242.

on previous occasions, infected the ears of the members of the provincial churches. It was therefore highly necessary, in order to prevent disturbance, that the minds of the people should be disabused of this error. James, therefore, proposed that Paul should join himself to four others, who had taken a vow upon themselves,* and should make the public exhibition of his adherence to the law still more conspicuous by undertaking the expenses of the requisite sacrifices. To this plan Paul could not reasonably object, inasmuch as there was nothing in it at all inconsistent with his strenuous maintenance of that great evangelical doctrine which declared the utter inefficacy of the law towards justification. By this act, he made a public declaration of his adherence to the law of his forefathers, which all his Gentile converts were aware he had not abandoned. In them, confessedly, such an act would, on his own principles, have been an avowal of apostacy from the Gospel. But what had the performance by a Jew of a rite of the Jewish law to do with the question of the circumcision of the Gentiles?

At the close of the seven days allotted by the Mosaic ritual for purposes of purification, some of the Asiatic Jews, who had known Paul when on his missionary tours through their own country, seeing their old disputant in the midst of the temple, against whose worship they understood that he had preached to the Gentiles, immediately raised a great outcry, and fell upon him, dragging him along, and shouting to the multitude, "Men of Israel, help: this is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple,† and hath polluted this holy place. For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple." ‡ (Acts xxi. 28, 29.) The sanctuary, or court of the Jews, could not be crossed by an uncircumcised Gentile, and the transgression of the holy limit was punishable with death. Within this holy court the scene now described took place, and as the whole sanctuary was then crowded with Jews who had

* Joseph. De Bello Jud., lib. ii., cap. xv., sect. 1; Antiq., lib. xix., cap. 6., sect. 1.

† The Jews were always most anxious to keep their temple from being defiled by the presence of Gentiles. They might enter within the limits of the "mountain of the house;" that is, within as much of the whole site as lay between the outer wall and the enclosure before the temple courts; but they might not enter into any of these courts, nor even into the enclosure, before them. Before the entrance to this were pillars, on which were inscriptions in Greek and Latin, giving notice that no strangers were allowed to enter, under pain of death. (Joseph. Antiq., lib. xv., cap. xi., sect. 5.)

‡ "This," says Alfred Barnes, "is a most striking illustration of the manner in which accusations are often brought against others. They had *seen* him with Paul in the city; they *inferred*, therefore, that he had been with him in the temple. They did not even pretend that they had *seen* him in the temple; but the inference was enough to inflame the angry and excitable passions of the multitude. So in the accusations which men now often make of others. They *see* one thing, they *infer* another; they could *testify* to one thing, but they *conclude* that another thing will also be true, and that other thing they charge on them as true. If men would state facts as they are, no small part of the slanderous accusations against others would cease. An end would be made of most of the charges of falsehood and error and heresy and dishonesty and double-dealing and immorality. If a statement be made, it should be made of the thing as it was. If we attempt to state what a man has done, it should not be what we suppose he has done."

come from all parts of the world, to attend the festival in Jerusalem, the hubbub raised against Paul speedily drew thousands around him. Hearing the complaint that he was an apostate Jew, who in other countries had used his utmost endeavours to pour contempt on his own nation, and to bring their worship into disrepute, and had now not only the presumption to appear in the holy place, which he had publicly blasphemed, but also the audacity to profane it by introducing into its sacred precincts one of those Gentiles for whose company he had abandoned the fellowship of Israel,—all joined in the rush which was made upon the Apostle, and drew him out of the temple, the gates of which were immediately closed by the Levites on duty, lest in the riot that was expected to ensue, the consecrated pavement should be polluted with the blood of Paul.* It was doubtless a preconcerted act, that Paul should have been dragged out of the temple and put to death in the confusion; thus terminating his ministry and persecutions by the brilliant crown of martyrdom. Now commenced the fulfilment of the prophecy which had attended the Apostle throughout his journey.

The temple, however, was overlooked by the tower of Antonia. The troops which the Romans always kept in the city were quartered here; and during the festivals, which frequently led to a riot, the soldiers remained under arms, and were ready, at a moment's notice, to descend by two flights of steps to the porticos of the temple.† The Commander at this time was Claudius Lysias,‡ who, probably thinking of a rebellion against the Romans, instantly ordered a detachment of several companies under arms, and hurried down with them to the scene of riot, and rescued Paul, who had already received several blows. The throng continued so great, that, as soon as he was fastened by chains to two soldiers, Lysias ordered him to be taken to the tower. He then demanded, what all this riot meant. To his inquiry, the mob replied with a variety of statements: some cried one thing, and some another. As the Captain was making his way with the prisoner up the steps, Paul asked whether he might have the liberty to speak with him. The Captain, astonished at hearing himself addressed in the Grecian tongue, said, "Canst thou speak Greek? Art not thou that Egyptian,§ which before

* Bacon's Lives of the Apostles, p. 596.

† Joseph. De Bell. Jud., lib. v., cap. v., sect. 8.

‡ In the tower of Antonia a guard of Roman soldiers was stationed to secure the temple, and maintain the peace. The commander of this cohort is here termed "the Chief Captain." Reference is made to this guard several times in the New Testament. (Matt. xxvii. 65, 66; John xviii. 12; Acts v. 26.) The word translated "Chief Captain," denotes, properly, one who commanded a thousand men. The "band" was the tenth part of a legion, and consisted sometimes of four hundred and twenty-five soldiers; at others, of five hundred; and at others, of six hundred, according to the size of the legion.

§ Impostors frequently appeared in Judea, taking advantage of the national expectation of the Messiah, and drawing after them great multitudes, who frequently fell under the severity of the Government, as being guilty of riot. Theudas promised to divide Jordan, and seduced many to follow him; but he was killed by the Roman troops before he could perform his miracle. (Watson's Works, vol. ix., p. 226, 8vo. edit.) We are told that this Egyptian came to Jerusalem, declaring that he was a Prophet, and advising the multitude of the common people to go with him to the Mount of Olives. He said, moreover, that he would show them from thence how the walls of

these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were " (σικαριων) * " murderers ? " (Acts xxi. 37, 38.) But Paul immediately said, " I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city of Cilicia ; a citizen of no mean city." It was not long before the arrival of Paul, that an Egyptian deluded as many as thirty thousand persons, who followed him to the Mount of Olives, and threatened to enter Jerusalem. The inhabitants, turbulent as they were, and impatient of their yoke, willingly assisted the Governor in checking such formidable invaders ; and the Roman garrison, quartered in Jerusalem, quickly dispersed the ill-organized rabble, whom fanaticism and a love of plunder had united in this hopeless enterprise. It was, perhaps, an intentional falsehood of some of the rioters which led the chief Captain to mistake Paul for the Egyptian impostor ; but being answered by him in Greek, and hearing him declare himself a citizen of Tarsus, he allowed him to address the multitude from the steps on which they were standing, who by this time had become more calm and composed. The Apostle gave the people a short account of his birth and education, of his zeal for the rites and customs of the Jewish religion, and with what earnestness he formerly put to death all the Christians he could discover. He next gave them an exact but succinct relation of the way and manner of his conversion, and how that he had received an immediate command from God himself to depart from Jerusalem, and preach unto the Gentiles. When he mentioned that his commission extended thus far, the people could no longer restrain their impatience ; they received it as a positive confession of the charge of having desecrated and degraded his national religion, and simultaneously interrupted him with the ferocious cry, " Away with such a fellow from the earth ! it is not fit that he should live," they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air. (Acts xxii. 22, 23.) The chief Captain, finding that this discussion was not likely to accomplish any good purpose, instantly put a stop to it, and " commanded Paul to be brought into the castle."

An atrocious act of flagrant injustice now awaited the Apostle from the hands of the military Captain. The rapacity and extortion which characterized the Roman Governors dictated the policy of conciliating

Jerusalem would fall down ; and promised to them an entrance through those walls, when they were fallen down. His object was to take the city by force, seize the Roman garrison, and assume the government of the people. But the Roman Governor, Felix, marched his forces to meet them, and falling upon them, dispersed them with great ease. Four hundred were killed, and two hundred taken prisoners ; but the Egyptian fled with a few of his more attached followers. As he was still alive, Lysias supposed he had got into the city, and had raised the commotion which he witnessed. That the Jews were beating Paul, was not calculated to undeceive him, as the people of Jerusalem before had shown themselves very adverse to the designs of the Egyptian impostor. (Joseph. Antiq., lib. xx., cap. viii., sect. 6 ; De Bell. Jud., lib. ii., cap. xiii., sect. 5.)

* Sicarii, " assassins." So called from *sica*, " a short dagger or poignard." Josephus says, that, at one time, Judea, and particularly the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, was infested with a set of villains, called " sicarii," who murdered people in the day-time, and in the midst of the city, with daggers which they concealed under their garments. (Antiq., lib. xx., cap. viii., sect. 5, 6, 10 ; and De Bell. Jud., lib. ii., cap. xiii., sect. 3, 5.)

the most powerful and clamorous party. On this principle Lysias acted. Instead of confronting him with one or more of his accusers, he proceeded on the presumption, that Paul had given just cause of offence, and resolved to extort from him the reason of the tumult by means of the scourge.* While the guard were binding him with thongs to the pillar, and before the instrument of punishment was applied, Paul said to the Centurion, who was superintending the operation, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" This question put a stop to all the proceedings at once. The Centurion immediately let the thongs fall, and, running to the Tribune, exclaimed, "Take heed what thou doest, for this man is a Roman." Lysias then came to Paul, and, in great trepidation, said, "Tell me, art thou a Roman citizen?" desirous of ascertaining the manner in which the prisoner had obtained this most sacred of all privileges; remarking that, in order to procure that right for himself, he had to produce a large sum of money, probably doubting whether a man of Paul's poverty-stricken appearance were able to purchase the immunity; to whom Paul replied, that it was his birthright.† The Tribune,‡ being startled that he had chained and bound a denizen of Rome, kept the Apostle with great care in the castle, as a place of safety from his Jewish persecutors; and what had been denied to justice was granted through fear. The officer now did what he should have been content to do in the first instance. He referred the case, which he could not understand, it being "a question of words and names and of their law," (Acts xviii. 15,) to the Sanhedrim; in the presence of which body he resolved to have a full investigation of his character, and the charges which were brought against him. On the following morning, the Sanhedrim was convened, and Paul placed before them.

Before this tribunal, where his heavenly Master and Peter and John had already stood for sentence, Paul was now placed. He opened his defence in a very appropriate and self-vindicative style.

* Scourging was a method of examination used by the Romans, and other nations, to force such as were supposed guilty to confess what they had done, what were their motives, and who were their accomplices. Thus Tacitus tells us of Herennius Gallus, (Tacit. Hist., lib. iv., cap. 27,) that he received several stripes, that it might be known for what price, and with what confederates, he had betrayed the Roman army. It is to be observed, however, that the Romans were punished in this wise, not by whips and scourges, but with rods only; and therefore it is that Cicero, (Orat. pro Rabirio,) speaking against Labienus, tells his audience, that the Porcian law permitted a Roman to be whipped with rods; but he, like a good and merciful man, (speaking ironically,) had done it with scourges; and still further, neither by whips nor rods could a citizen of Rome be punished, until he were first adjudged to lose his privilege, to be *uncitizened*, and declared to be an enemy to the commonwealth; then he might be scourged, and put to death. Cicero (Orat. in Verr.) says, "It is a foul fault for any Prætor to bind a citizen of Rome, a piacular offence to scourge him, a kind of parricide to kill him. What shall I call the crucifying of such an one?"

† "Cædebatur virgis in medio foro Messanæ civis Romanus, cum interea nullus gemitus, nulla vox alia istius miseri audiebatur, nisi hæc, Civis Romanus sum. Hac se commemoratione civitatis omnia verbera depulsurum arbitrabatur. O nomen dulce libertatis! O jus eximium nostræ civitatis! O lex Porcia, legesque Semproniæ!" (Cic. in Verr., lib. vii.)

‡ Χιλιαρχος, "a Roman military tribune," or "commander of a cohort;" of which there were six to a legion. (John xviii. 12.) Josephus and Plutarch use the word in this technical sense.

"Men and brethren," said he, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." Ananias the High Priest, provoked at the language of the Apostle, ordered the bystanders to strike him in the face.* Paul, indignant at this wanton insult, and the high-armed tyranny of this outrageous attack, answered in honest wrath, accompanied with a prophetical allusion to the violent death which Ananias ultimately underwent, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall! † For sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's High Priest? Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the High Priest: ‡ for it is written, Thou shalt

* It is still usual in the East, and particularly in Persia, for a person in authority to order an offender who appears before him to be smitten on the mouth, if he make an answer or remark which is not approved. This is on the old oriental principle of punishing the offending part. The blow is usually inflicted with the heel of a shoe, and is very severe, often breaking the teeth and causing the blood to flow.

† About five years after this, during the government of Florus, Eleazar, a son of Ananias, placed himself at the head of a party of turbulent persons, who took possession of the temple, and would allow no sacrifices to be offered for the Emperor; and these being joined by a party of (sicarii) assassins, every person of note was obliged to seek for safety in vaults and sewers. Ananias sought safety in the royal palace; and when it was assaulted and forced by the assassins, he retreated, with his brother Hezekiah, to an old aqueduct, from which they were exultingly dragged, and slain upon the spot. (Joseph. De Bell., lib. ii., cap. xvii., sect. 2, 6, 9.)

‡ Ananias, the son of Nebedæus, was High Priest at the time that Queen Helena supplied the Jews with corn from Egypt, (Jos. Ant., lib. xx., cap. v., sect. 2,) during the famine which occurred in the reign of Claudius. Paul therefore, who took a journey to Jerusalem at that period, (Acts xv.,) could not have been ignorant of the elevation of Ananias to that dignity. Soon after the holding of the first Council, as it is called, at Jerusalem, Ananias was dispossessed of his office, in consequence of certain acts of violence between the Samaritans and the Jews, and sent prisoner to Rome, (Joseph. Antiq., lib. xx., cap. vi., sect. 2,) where he was afterwards released, and returned to Jerusalem. Now, from that period he could not be called High Priest, in the proper sense of the word; though Josephus (Antiq., lib. xx., cap. ix., sect. 3; and De Bell. Jud., lib. ii., cap. xvii., sect. 9) has sometimes given him the title of, *αρχιερευς*, taken in the more extensive meaning of a "Priest" who had a seat and voice in the Sanhedrim; (*αρχιερεις*, in the plural number, is frequently used in the New Testament, when allusion is made to the Sanhedrim;) and Jonathan, though we are not acquainted with the circumstances of his elevation, had been raised, in the mean time, to the supreme dignity in the Jewish Church. Between the death of Jonathan, who was murdered (Joseph. Antiq. Jud., lib. xx., cap. viii., sect. 5) by order of Felix, and the high priesthood of Ismael, who was invested with that office by Agrippa, (Joseph. Antiq. Jud., lib. xx., cap. viii., sect. 8,) elapsed an interval in which this dignity continued vacant. Now it happened precisely at this interval, that Paul was apprehended in Jerusalem; and the Sanhedrim, being destitute of a President, Ananias undertook, of his own authority, the discharge of that office, which he executed with the greatest tyranny. (Joseph. Antiq. Jud., lib. xx., cap. ix., sect. 2.) It is possible, therefore, that Paul, who had been only a few days in Jerusalem, might be ignorant that Ananias, who had been dispossessed of the priesthood, had taken upon himself a trust to which he was not entitled. He might therefore very naturally exclaim, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the High Priest!" Admitting him, on the other hand, to have been acquainted with the fact, the expression must be considered as an indirect reproof, and a tacit refusal to recognise usurped authority. (Michaëlis's Introd. to the New Test., vol. i., pp. 52, 53. 8vo. edit. London, 1823.)

The violent death of Jonathan has been alluded to. He endeavoured to assume the appearance of a friend of Felix, and, like the Christian Apostle Paul, would reason with him on *temperance and righteousness*. His remonstrances, if at the time they produced the same effect, and made Felix tremble, were fatal to himself. Felix, weary with his importunity, entered into a secret conspiracy with some of the sicarii, or assassins, the most extravagant of the school of Judas the Galilean. These were men, some fanatics, some unprincipled desperadoes, who abused the precepts of the Mosaic law, as authorizing the murder of all on whom they might affix the brand of hostility

not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." (Acts xxiii. 3—5.) He then adopted a mode of defence on which he reckoned upon dividing the counsels of his adversaries. Nor was he disappointed. Perceiving that the Sanhedrim was composed partly of Pharisees, and partly of Sadducees, he determined to avail himself of the mutual hatred of the two great sects, by making his own persecution a kind of party question: he therefore cried out in the Council, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am called in question!" This quickly divided the assembly. Instantly all the violent feeling between the two parties broke out in full force; and the Scribes, who belonged to the order of the Pharisees, declared, "We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God." This last remark was throwing the gauntlet at the Sadducees, who, denying absolutely the existence of either angel or spirit, could, of course, believe no part of Paul's revelation from on high. The strife grew so hot, that Paul was near being "pulled in pieces of them;" and the officer, seeing that they could not come to any conclusion on the prisoner's case, withdrew him, and thus Paul escaped that condemnation which would have been pronounced upon him had they remained unanimous. In the course of the night, the Lord appeared to him, who bade him be of good courage, and as he had testified of him at Jerusalem, so also should he bear witness of him at Rome. This was a comfortable assurance to the Apostle. He discovered that all he had undergone was of divine appointment; that the "Keeper of Israel" was his safeguard and tower; and that he needed not to fear what man could do unto him. On the next morning the fulfilment of this heavenly announcement commenced. The furious Jews, now cut off from all possibility of doing any violence to Paul, either by unlawful acts, or by a judicial murder, determined to set all moderation aside. Up to this period, according to the representation of the Jewish historian, the Pontificate had remained almost entirely uncontaminated by the general licence and turbulence which distracted the nation. The Priests were, in general, moderate and upright men, who had endeavoured to maintain the peace of the city. The evil now extended to the sanctuary, and feuds rent the family of Levi. Even the worst excesses of the sicarii seem to have been authorized by the priesthood for their own purposes. We are not therefore surprised that the diabolical iniquity of the wretched Ananias should develope itself in a plot, of which he was the promoter, that was intended to terminate all future aggressions on the part of the Apostle. Forty of the most desperate of the Jews, the sicarii, bound themselves by a solemn oath, neither to eat nor drink until

to their country, and their God. Having bribed Doras, the intimate friend of Jonathan, through his means Felix sent a party of these wretches into the temple. With their daggers under their cloaks, they mingled with the attendants of the High Priest. They pretended to join in the public worship, and suddenly struck dead the unsuspecting Pontiff, who lay bleeding on the sacred pavement. From this period, says the indignant Josephus, God hated his guilty city; and, disdaining any longer to dwell in his contaminated temple, brought the Romans to purify with fire the sins of the nation. (Milman's History of the Jews, vol. ii., p. 206.)

they had slain Paul.* In the arrangement of the manner in which this sanguinary vow was to be performed, it was agreed that the High Priest should send a request to the Tribune, that Paul should be brought once more before the Council, that some further inquiries might be made which were necessary to their final and more complete satisfaction; in the mean time these assassins were so to station themselves that they might rush upon the Apostle, and despatch him before the guards had presence of mind to discern the assailants, or to rescue Paul. But "a bird of the air carried the voice, and that which hath wings told the matter." (Eccles. x. 20.) The plot reached the ears of the nephew of Paul; a young man nowhere else mentioned in the New Testament, and of whose character and situation nothing is known. He came instantly to his uncle, who sent the informant to the chief Captain. As soon as Lysias received this information respecting the desperate character of the opposition to Paul, he resolved no longer to risk the prisoner's life in Jerusalem, guarded as it was by the powerful defences of Antonia. He dismissed the young man, after having enjoined profound secrecy, and immediately made preparations to send Paul to Cæsarea, as a prisoner of state. He directed two Centurions to draw out a detachment, including two hundred heavy-armed soldiers, ninety horsemen, and two hundred lancers, to convey him beyond the reach of the Jerusalem sicarii. These warriors, accompanied by their prisoner, set out from Jerusalem, and, after forty miles of hard riding, reached Antipatris before day; and as all danger from the Jerusalem assassins was out of the question, four hundred of the guard returned to the metropolis, leaving Paul seventy soldiers as an escort, with which he journeyed to Cæsarea, where he was presented by the Commander of the detachment to Felix, the Roman Governor, who, learning that Paul was of Cilicia, committed him to an apartment of the great palace, until his accusers from Jerusalem should arrive.

The Sanhedrim pursued their hated adversary to the tribunal of the Governor. Ananias went down in person, and an advocate was hired to give more weight to the accusation. The Jews had again recourse to the forms of justice; but they were again disappointed. Tertullus charged the Apostle with sedition, heresy, and with profanation of the

* It appears from many passages in the Talmud, that it was usual for the Jews to vow that they would not eat for a particular time, or till some design which they entertained were accomplished. Sometimes they only bound themselves to abstinence from particular things, and then others were lawful to them. But the present vow was absolute; and it appears to have been no unusual thing for certain zealots thus to bind themselves to slay those whom they believed to be worthy of death, but whose destruction could not be effected by any legal process. Josephus mentions an instance in which ten Jews bound themselves, by an oath, to destroy the first Herod, because he had violated the ancient customs of the nation. They were discovered before they could effect their intention; and, being brought before the King, were so far from betraying any fear or compunction, that they gloried in the act they had meditated; and, holding up their daggers, avowed that they believed the conspiracy to which they had sworn was a holy and pious action; and that what they had purposed to do was not for any gain or honour to themselves, nor for any indulgence to their passions, but in behalf of the customs of their country, which every Jew was bound to observe, or die for. They received their deaths with great constancy, amidst the sympathy of the people, who manifested their approbation of the design by tearing limb from limb the spy who had revealed the plot, and throwing his remains to the dogs. (Illustrated Commentary.)

temple; and complained that Lysias, the Tribune at Jerusalem, had violently interposed to prevent them from judging him according to their law. These accusations Paul satisfactorily answered; and challenged the Chief Priests themselves to bring forward any misdemeanor he had committed before the Sanhedrim, except his declaration "concerning the resurrection of the dead," which might indeed have offended the Sadducees, his enemies; but which the Roman Judge would not term a crime. His masterly defence satisfied Felix of his innocence, who understood more about "the way," as the Gospel was then called, than was usually known to Roman Governors: nevertheless, being unwilling to displease the Jews, and looking for a bribe from Paul himself, he would not dismiss him, but postponed the decision of the trial, under the pretext that he must wait for the testimony of Lysias, in order to gain full information respecting the case. The Centurion was directed to keep Paul in easy confinement, to allow him relaxation, and not to prevent his friends from assisting and visiting him. In this state of imprisonment he continued two years, at the termination of which Felix was superseded by Porcius Festus; and, "willing to show the Jews a pleasure, he left Paul bound." *

The Jews lost no time in endeavouring to secure the person of Paul. With the High Priest at their head, they renewed their bloody designs; and their last failure having been in wresting justice, they now returned to a plan of violence. Festus, immediately after his accession to his government, went up to Jerusalem from Cæsarea: there the High Priest and chief of the Jews renewed their complaints against Paul, praying that Festus would send for him to Jerusalem, but plotting to kill him by the way. The Procurator, however, having received some notification of the mischievous design, from the friends of the Apostle, positively refused to bring the prisoner to Jerusalem; and also required the presence of the accusers in the proper seat of the supreme provincial administration of justice at Cæsarea. After remaining in Jerusalem ten days, he returned to the civil capital; and with a commendable activity in his judicial proceedings, on the next day after his arrival in Cæsarea, summoned Paul and his accusers before him. The Jews, of course, repeated their oft-told tale, "and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove." (Acts xxv. 7.) As the trial proceeded, in which they egregiously failed to establish these charges, Festus, having been in some way influenced to favour the designs of the Jews, urged Paul to go up to Jerusalem, there to be tried by the supreme religious court of his own nation. The Apostle, well understanding the consequences of that proposal, replied by a bold and distinct

* This scheme of Felix to ingratiate himself with the Jews did not answer. He had disgraced the office which he held by perpetual acts of tyranny, rapine, and murder: therefore, as soon as he was gone, some of the principal Jews of Cæsarea followed him to Rome to accuse him to the Emperor; and he would at length have suffered for his many years of misrule, if his brother Pallas, who was in high favour with Nero, had not befriended him, and exerted his powerful influence to secure him from the Monarch's displeasure. (Burton's Lectures, &c., p. 253; Milman's History of the Jews, vol. ii., p. 210.)

assertion of his rights as a Roman citizen, alleging that he had done nothing to deserve to be delivered up to the Jewish Sanhedrim; that he was entitled to be tried by a Roman tribunal; and since he could not get justice at the provincial court of Cæsarea, he appealed to the bar of Cæsar at Rome. "I stand," said the Apostle, "at Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I APPEAL UNTO CÆSAR." * (Acts xxv. 10, 11.) This solemn *formula* placed the Apostle far beyond the reach of all inferior tyranny: no Governor on earth durst interfere with an appellant Roman citizen, when he flung himself before this grand palladium of Roman law. Festus, though evidently displeased at the course which events had taken, could not breast the torrent, and, after conferring with his Council, replied to Paul, "Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go."

But before he could be sent off, and within a few days after the trial, Agrippa, with his sister Bernice,† came to Cæsarea, to wait

* By the Valerian, Porcian, and Sempronian laws, it had been enacted, that if any Magistrate should be about to beat, or put to death, any Roman citizen, the accused could appeal to the Roman people, and this conveyed the cause to Rome. The law was so far changed under the Emperors, that the cause should be carried before them, instead of the people. Every citizen had the right of an appeal; and when it was made, the accused was sent to Rome for trial; the inferior Magistrate, or distant Governor, had no further power in the case; and it became highly penal for him to take any further measures in the affair, save that of sending to Rome, with all convenient speed, the person who had appealed to the tribunal of the Emperor. This privilege of a Roman citizen was highly valued, particularly in the distant provinces, where it afforded the persons who enjoyed it a very enviable protection from the tyranny and arbitrary conduct into which provincial Governors, remote from the immediate cognizance and control of the supreme power, were but too apt to fall. Many readers will recollect that the younger Pliny, in his letter to the Emperor Trajan concerning the Christians, after mentioning that he had ordered those persons to be led forth to execution, who persisted, before his tribunal, in avowing that they were Christians, adds, that there were others infected with the like insanity, whom, because they were citizens of Rome, he had directed to be sent thither. (The Letters of Pliny, by Melmoth, vol. ii., book x., letter xcvii., p. 672. Fourth edit. London, 1757.)

† This celebrated woman was the sister of Agrippa, and consequently of Drusilla, the wife of Felix. When her father died, she was sixteen years of age, and the wife of her uncle, Herod of Chalcis. After his death, a proposal was, with her concurrence, made to Polemon, King of Pontus and part of Cicilia, that she would marry him, on condition of his being circumcised; and to this, her extreme beauty, and still more her great wealth, induced him to consent. They did not, however, live long together; and when she left her husband, she went to her brother Agrippa; and Polemon testified his resentment, by abandoning the religion which he had adopted only for her sake. The manner in which Bernice and Agrippa, after this, lived together, was exceedingly criminal, and became the common talk of society. It is even noticed by the Roman satirist, when speaking of a rich diamond in her possession:

——————— Hunc dedit olim
Barbarus *incestæ*, dedit hunc *Agrippa* sorori.—Sat. vi.

She, with her brother, followed Titus to Rome. That conqueror himself became violently attached to her, and she lived for a while in criminal intercourse with him. He would fain have married her, but the idea of their Emperor's marriage to an alien and a Jewess, was so revolting to the people, that he durst not execute his intention; and finding that the people murmured to see him so enslaved to a foreign beauty, one of the first acts of his reformed conduct, when he became sole Emperor, was to dismiss her, and to oblige her to depart, not only from Rome, but even from Italy.

upon the new Governor with their congratulations on his arrival. This Agrippa was King of Iturea, Trachonitis, Abilene, and other northern regions of Palestine, and the son of that Herod Agrippa whose character and actions were so closely connected with some of the incidents of Peter's life. During their stay at Cæsarea, Festus related to the King the case of Paul, as one with which he would doubtless be interested, connected as it indisputably was with the civil and religious affairs of that people to whom Agrippa himself belonged; and in the *minutiæ* of whose law and theology he had doubtless been well instructed. Agrippa's curiosity was excited, and he expressed a wish to hear him. Festus, not knowing what to state concerning his prisoner in his letter to Cæsar, and wishing, therefore, to avail himself of Agrippa's knowledge, gladly complied. On the next day, preparations were made for this audience, in the presence of which Paul was placed. The King, as the highest authority present, requested the Apostle to speak for himself. He gave an account of his former life, and of his conversion, and was stating that his doctrine was agreeable to what Moses and the Prophets had taught, which was, that Christ was to suffer, and, having risen the first from the dead, was to be a light to the people and to the Gentiles; when Festus, to whom as a Heathen all this was foolishness, cried out, "Paul, thou art beside thyself. Much learning doth make thee mad!" So admirably, however, did the Apostle conduct his defence, that, in spite of the sneer of the Governor, Agrippa paid the prisoner as high a compliment as could be expected, when he pronounced him guiltless of the charges which had been brought against him; and then, with Bernice and his train, left the court, suggesting, that Paul might have been set at liberty, had he not appealed to Cæsar. The voyage to Rome was now decided upon, and early in October, when the season had become unfavourable, he set sail, having been consigned, along with other prisoners of state, to the care of a Roman officer, Julius, a Centurion of the Augustan cohort. Luke and Aristarchus accompanied him, not as prisoners, but as the voluntary companions of the Apostle. After suffering shipwreck, and exhibiting the "signs of an Apostle," at Malta,* he reached Italy, and had the comfort, almost as soon as he landed, of meeting with brethren in Jesus Christ, with whom he stayed a week at Puteoli. We may form some idea of the numbers and zeal of the Christians then at Rome, when we find, that in these few days they heard of Paul being at Puteoli, and that some of them came even as far as fifty miles from the city to meet him on his way. Entering the city, he was delivered into the custody of the Prætorian Prefect,† who allowed him to reside in a private lodging, under the eye of an attendant soldier. This post was held at present by Burrus, who was, *ex*

* We are, perhaps, warranted in supposing that Christianity was at that time introduced into the island; and the miraculous cures performed by Paul, would alone have been sufficient to make many converts. But when we read in ancient Martyrologies, that Publius was made Bishop of Malta, and afterwards succeeded Dionysius, the Areopagite, in the bishopric of Athens, and subsequently suffered martyrdom, we must bear in mind that these lists of early Bishops are deserving of very little credit.

† The Letters of Pliny. By Melmoth. Vol. ii., epist. 65, p. 641. London, 1757.

officio, the keeper of all prisoners of state brought from the provinces to Rome, and one of the few persons, whose characters relieve the depravity of the reign of Nero. In Rome, the Apostle was free to every purpose of the service of the Gospel, which could be accomplished within the walls of the city. So far from his labours being intermitted, they were greater than ever. First of all, he took measures to correct the misrepresentations which were then on their way, and obtained a conference with the principal Jews at his lodgings. The Jews in Rome appear to have been less illiberal and bigoted than those in the countries nearer to Asia, which Paul had hitherto visited. They had heard some of the general calumnies spread against the Christians; but their countrymen in Judea had not taken the same pains to prejudice them against Paul, which they had used in Greece and Asia Minor. While he was at Cæsarea, they hoped to put him to death, and thus hinder his further exertions; and he arrived at Rome so early in the year, that they had not had time during the winter months to send their usual emissaries, who might spread their calumnies against him. Many of the Jews in Rome had received the Gospel; and Paul's first attempt, on arriving there, was the conversion of his unbelieving countrymen. They listened to him with patience; some were persuaded by his arguments, and others manifested the usual obstinacy.

It is much to be regretted that Luke did not continue the Acts of the Apostles beyond the arrival of Paul at Rome. He tells us indeed, that "he dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him;" (Acts xxviii. 30, 31;) but this is all the information which he has left us; and what we know of these two years, is scantily gathered from expressions in Paul's own Epistles, and from the few traditions preserved by ecclesiastical writers. "We should wish particularly to know," says Dr. Burton, "whether he pleaded his cause before the Emperor in person. Festus had professed himself at a loss as to the terms of the accusation, which he was to send with him to Rome; and we are not informed under what description of prisoners he would be classed, when he arrived in that city. It is the opinion of Baronius, that he would have to appear, not only before the Emperor, but before the Senate, and the Pontifical College; in which, he seems to have considered, that the case would have been treated as one affecting religion. But this is very uncertain. The persons in authority at Rome would have felt, like Festus, that the question between Paul and the Jews merely involved 'certain questions of their own superstition;' and if the Apostle's long confinement at Rome was caused at all by the machinations of the Jews, they would not have been likely to press those points which concerned their own religion. It is difficult, however, to account for the length of time that elapsed before Paul was released, except that such delays appear to have been not infrequent in the hearing of causes which came from distant provinces. He certainly made a defence, because he speaks of it in one of his own

letters; (Phil. i. 7;) but we are not told that he addressed it to Nero himself; and it seems certain, that he made it not long before his release. We might, perhaps, conjecture, that the Jews were instrumental in keeping him so long a prisoner. At least, we know, that the wish would not be wanting; and though they might not be able to allege any specific crime, their object was so far gained, if they could check for a time his more active exertions. It is stated, that soon after the removal of Felix, the Jews sent a deputation to accuse him to the Emperor; and these men may, perhaps, have insinuated, that he had favoured a person who was opposed to the Roman Government. Felix himself was probably in Rome, when Paul arrived there; and it is difficult to say what account he would have given the Emperor of his extraordinary prisoner. His own opinion would certainly have been favourable: but, at this time, he would wish to conciliate the Jews, who were come to accuse him, and he may have helped to throw delays in the way of Paul making his defence. We have stated, that Felix was screened from punishment through the influence of Pallas; and though this favourite of fortune was no longer at the head of affairs, as he had been in the former reign, he may have contrived to keep Paul from obtaining a hearing." *

Notwithstanding, the word was not bound. It is evident, that the very bonds of Paul helped, rather than hindered, the cause of the Gospel, both by confirming by his example the endurance of the brethren within the church, and by making him notorious to those without, even in the very palace and household of Cæsar. Christ was thus publicly proclaimed; and although some published his name, not with any view to the truth, but, on the contrary, to bring his Preacher Paul into trouble, ascribing false and mischievous doctrines unto him, yet others, taking courage by his example, and resolved to clear his character, knowing that he was set for the defence of the Gospel, preached Christ through sincerity and love. One main point of resistance which had been so formidable elsewhere, was here much abated. In the plundered and impoverished provinces of Greece and the East, the Jews, as under the same circumstances at this day, engrossed the wealth of the country; and, therefore, under a government which respected their religion as being a national one, their power of persecuting the Christians, whom they represented as apostates, was almost equal to their will. But here, in the enormous wealthy capital, filled with all the rank of the empire, they were lost, were sunk in the very dregs of its populace, objects of derision and contempt. Such too of the Heathen, as were likely to raise opposition, had not as yet deigned even to hear of the rising sect. At present, all went on prosperously: the faith was working silently and surely, and the church at Rome soon became more wealthy and more numerous than any other in Christendom.† Paul did not obtain a hearing until he had been a prisoner nearly two years: in the mean time the Gospel made its way among the individuals connected with

* Burton's Lectures on Eccles. Hist. of the First Century, pp. 262—264.
† Evans's Scripture Biography, p. 280.

the court. If the Narcissus who is mentioned by Paul, (Rom. xvi. 11,) was the celebrated freedman of Claudius, Christianity had found its way into the Emperor's household, three years before the arrival of the Apostle; and some of these converts were, probably, people of rank. But the identity of these two persons must be considered a very doubtful point. It is more satisfactory to find Paul sending a salutation from those of "Cæsar's household." (Phil. i. 12, 13; iv. 22.) Tacitus has supplied us with the name of one lady of rank, who embraced Christianity while Paul was a resident in Rome. This was Pomponia Græcina, the wife of Plautus, the conqueror of Britain; who, in the second year of the Apostle's imprisonment, is stated to have been "accused of embracing the rites of a foreign superstition;"* and the expressions of the historian have generally been taken to indicate that she had embraced Christianity. The Martyrologies mention Torpetes, who was attached to the Emperor's household; but we know nothing more concerning him, except that he is said to have suffered martyrdom.† Much less credit is due to the notion, that Poppæa Sabina, one of the earliest of Nero's mistresses, was converted to the Gospel. Josephus‡ speaks of her as a woman of piety, because she sometimes had shown a disposition to favour the Jews; but such a feeling was not unlikely to prejudice her against the Christians; and it is impossible to read the character given of her by Tacitus,§ without seeing that there was no period in her disgraceful life, when the Gospel could be said to have made an impression on her mind. Much has been said with regard to Paul's intercourse with Seneca: all, however, seem now to be of one opinion, that the letters which are extant, and which professed to have been interchanged between Paul and that philosopher, are spurious. In the mean while Paul had made his defence; and though his sentence had not been pronounced when he wrote to the Philippians, he seems to have known that the issue would be favourable.‖ In a short time he was fully restored to liberty.

After the release of Paul, we have only uncertain tradition for our guide, respecting the brief remaining period of his life.¶ It seems probable that he revisited some of the Grecian and Asiatic churches: whether he ever was enabled to fulfil his purpose of proceeding to Spain, remains a subject of controversy.** Dr. Hinds imagines, that on his

* Taciti Annales, lib. xiii., cap. 32.

† Martyrolog. Roman. Maii 17. Theodorus Metochita, a writer of the thirteenth century, mentions a cupbearer and a mistress of Nero, who were converted by Paul.

‡ Joseph. Antiq., lib. xx., cap. 8, sect. 11.

§ Taciti Annales, lib. xiii., cap. 45.

‖ Burton's Lectures on Eccles. History, p. 272.

¶ See Niceph. Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 34. The hopelessness of constructing a satisfactory account of the life of Paul after his first imprisonment, sufficiently appears from the inconsistent views entertained by different writers, upon grounds that in themselves all appear plausible. Compare, for example, Paley's Horæ Paulinæ, p. 175; Lardner, Works, vol. v., p. 529, *et seq.*; and Neander, vol. i., p. 399, *et seq.*

** Among the latest writers upon the subject, Neander supposes that the Apostle was in Spain, while Tate takes a different view. (Continuous Hist., p. 173, *et seq.*) Clemens Romanus expressly asserts, that he preached in the west, and that to its utmost bounds, which must at least include Spain. (Epist. i. ad Corinth., cap. 5.) And Theodoret adds, that he went to the islands of the sea, and numbers Gaul and Britain

release, he continued his ministry from Rome to other parts of Italy; but as to the precise object, or the result of his labours there, we have no certain account; and it is not desirable to mix the traditional records which do exist with his authentic history. It is a scruple, indeed, which the historian, who is passing the line which separates the one from the other, the inspired from the uninspired records, cannot be too cautious not to violate.* Ultimately he returned to Antioch. From this city he commenced his fifth and last apostolical journey, purposing, no doubt, to visit those places in which, during the preceding tour, he had planted the faith. The Colossians and Philippians he might be induced to visit, if it were only to express his sense of their kindness during his late imprisonment. From Troas he sailed into Italy.

The state of feeling had undergone a lamentable change. Rome was no longer to the Apostle that Rome which it had been before: the wild boar had broken into the vineyard of the church; its former cheerfulness was turned into mourning. Perhaps the Jews had been busy in his absence, spreading, as was their custom, calumnies against Christianity and Paul. Perhaps the Gnostic heresy, which by this time had made considerable progress, might have generated or aided the prejudice. From whatever cause, he found the Christians treated, according to the representations of Suetonius,† and Tacitus,‡ as an abominable sect, and deserving the hatred of all mankind. The Christian name now challenged general notice. The Magistrates regarded with jealousy a secret society, as it seemed to them to be. The people hated it for a thousand reasons. Some loathed it as a viler sect of vile Judaism. Some felt rebuked by the unblemished lives of its maintainers. Some were shocked at its rejection of all the rites which their superstitious idolatry thought essential to religion. Some abhorred its gloominess, which revolted from their shows and spectacles. It had scarcely reached the notice of the philosopher, who as yet was content to despise it at a distance; but it was known to be making sensible progress, and many a head of a family discovered, to his amazement and horror, that it had obtained footing in his own house. It was at once despised and dreaded. Nero,

among the disciples of the tent-maker. But there is great reason to doubt these reports: for, (1.) His long imprisonment of four years at Cæsarea, and at Rome, must have broken his measures, and circumscribed his travels. (2.) The interval between his first and second visit to Rome, seems to have been too short to afford time for a visit to Syria eastward, and afterwards in an opposite direction to Spain and Britain, the extremities of Europe westward. (3.) There is no notice taken of these western travels in Paul's last Epistle to Timothy, but only of his eastern. (4.) An ancient Greek writer of the travels of Peter and Paul, brought over by Petty, the skilful collector of the Arundel marbles, observes, that "Peter spent some days in Britain, and enlightened many by the word of grace; and having established churches (in the west), and elected Bishops, &c., came again to Rome in the twelfth year of Nero, when, having found Linus dead, he elected Clemens Bishop in his room; who, with great reluctance, accepted the station, and was afterwards spared in the ensuing persecution, because he was a kinsman of Nero." (See Cotelerius's Patres Apostolici, vol. i., p. 148, note 39. Hale's Analysis of Chronology, vol. iii., p. 546. London, 1830.)

* Hinds's History of the Rise and Early Progress of Christianity, p. 261. Second edition. London, 1846.

† Sueton. in Nerone, cap. xvi.

‡ Taciti Annales, lib. xv., cap. 44.

therefore, could not have chosen a more fit subject for the odious charge of having lighted that dreadful conflagration which consumed the best part of Rome. The word of God was now hindered indeed. It could be preached but in caves underneath the earth, in cellars, and in catacombs.* Paul, therefore, hastened to Rome, not recklessly to rush into the lion's mouth, but to encourage and comfort the church now in "the hour and the power of darkness."

Soon, very soon, was Paul arrested,† and thrown into the gloomy Mamertine dungeons. He was now in a very different kind of custody from his last. He was closely imprisoned, and found out only by such as, like Onesiphorus, made diligent inquiry. When he was placed for the first time to make his defence, at the tribunal of the Prætorian Prefect, so great was the danger of any connexion with him, that he found himself quite deserted. "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me."‡ (2 Tim. iv. 16.) It was here that he wrote his Second Epistle to Timothy, in which he solemnly expresses his full conviction, that the time of his departure was at hand. Having given this faithful disciple an affectionate charge, in which he shows how much his concern for the church of Christ absorbed any consideration of himself, and that the heresies and corruptions which should invade it were much more in his thoughts than his approaching sufferings, he concludes his testimony in terms of hallowed resignation, worthy an Apostle of Christ: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." How long Paul remained in prison, we know not; what his preparatory treatment was, we are not informed; no historian has stated whether Paul were scourged, as malefactors were accustomed to be, previous to their suffering. As a Roman citizen, by the Valerian and the Porcian law, Paul was spared this infliction, though, by the law of the twelve tables, notorious malefactors, condemned by the centuriate assemblies, were first to be scourged and then put to death. Baronius the

* Evans's Scripture Biography, p. 283.

† Tacitus informs us, that this persecution was attended by supernatural tempests and pestilence: "A year polluted by so many crimes, was marked by tempests and diseases, inflicted by the gods. The Campania was laid waste by a hurricane, which demolished villas, plantations, and fruits, everywhere, and extended its ravages to the vicinity of the city of Rome, where all descriptions of people were wasted by the violence of pestilence, without any perceptible inclemency of the weather. The houses were emptied of inhabitants, the highways filled with carcases. No age nor sex escaped the danger. Slaves and free alike were rapidly extinguished, amid the lamentations of their wives and children; who, during their attendance, while weeping over them, were often upon the same funeral pile themselves. The destruction of Roman Knights and Senators, however promiscuous, was less lamented; as if, in the common mortality, they only anticipated the cruelty of the Prince." (Taciti Annales, lib. xv., cap. 13.) These are curious and valuable records of professed enemies to Christianity, undesignedly vouching the divine vengeance upon the atrocious murderers of his chosen saints.

‡ See a valuable sermon, entitled "St. Paul at the Bar of Nero." By the Rev. Thomas Jackson, Theological Professor at the Wesleyan Institution, Richmond. Wesleyan Magazine, vol. lxviii., p. 953, *et seq.*

Annalist informs us, that in the church of St. Mary, beyond the bridge in Rome, the pillars are yet extant to which both Peter and Paul are said to have been bound and scourged.* As he was led to execution, tradition states, that he was instrumental in the conversion of three of the soldiers who were appointed to conduct him to, and guard him at, the place of execution; who, within a few days, by the command of the Emperor, became martyrs also for the truth. Arriving at the place which was called Aquæ Salvianæ, three miles from the imperial city, he surrendered his neck to the fatal sword.† As a Roman, he could not be executed on the cross: this was a death which was reserved only for the slave, and the worst of malefactors.‡ He was beheaded; and hence arose the custom of pictorial representations of the Apostle with a sword in his right hand. He is said to have been buried in the Via Ostiensis, about two miles from the city, over whose grave Constantine the Great, at the instance of Sylvester, Bishop of Rome, erected a stately church. He adorned it with marble columns, and most exquisite workmanship. In the time of Theodosius, the church was considered beneath the dignity of the Apostle: he therefore directed it to be taken down, and a more noble structure raised in its place. It was further beautified by Placidia, the Empress of Rome, at the desire of Leo, the Bishop.§

Clemens Romanus, the intimate friend of these illustrious Apostles and fellow-labourers in the Lord, Peter and Paul, thus pronounces the panegyric of both. "But not to insist upon ancient examples, let us come to those worthies that have been nearest to us, and take the brave examples of our own age. Through (false) zeal and envy, the most faithful and righteous pillars of the church have been persecuted even to the most grievous deaths. Let us set before our eyes the holy Apostles: Peter by unjust envy underwent not one or two, but many, sufferings; till at last, being martyred, he went to the place of glory that pertained unto him. For the same cause did Paul, in like manner, receive the reward of his patience. Seven times he was in bonds: he was whipped, was stoned; he preached both in the east and in the west, leaving behind him the glorious report of

* Baronii Eccles. Annal., A.D. 69.

† Chrysostom and Ambrose report, that when he was beheaded, a liquor, more like milk than blood, flowed from his veins, and spirted upon the clothes of his executioner: the former authority observes, that this became the means of converting his executioner, and many more to the faith. (Ambrosii Opera, tom. v., Serm. In Festo, S S. Petri et Pauli, fol., p. 141. Paris. 1661. Chrysostomi Opera. Serm. in Petr. et Paul, tom. viii., p. 10. Inter spuria.)

‡ Xenophon, De Exped. Cyri., lib. ii., in finem. Servi sunt in crucem sublati, militibus cervices abscissæ. (Hist. De Bell. Hispan., p. 460.)

§ On this subject the reader may consult Euseb. Eccles. Hist., lib. ii., cap. 25. Lactantius De Mort. Persecut., cap. ii., Ed. Vesont. 8vo. 1838. Ulric. Valenus, in a book, "Quo Petrus Romam non venisse demonstratur," 1660, 4to., p. 40, denies that Peter or Paul suffered at Rome, and endeavours to prove, that their martyrdom was at Jerusalem: this, with regard to Peter, Bale endeavours to maintain. (Centur. Scriptor. Brittan., p. 16.) This opinion is confuted by various writers, who are mentioned in Walch's Biblioth. Theol. Selecta, tom. iii., p. 458. (See Cave's Lives of the Apostles. 8vo. Edit. Life of Paul, chap. vii., sect. 9, p. 301. Oxford, 1840. Tillemont's Memoires, tom. i., p. 324. 4to. Paris, 1693.) On the fabulous circumstances relative to Paul's martyrdom, J. G. Walch's Hist. Eccles., Novi Test., part i., may be consulted.

his faith; and having taught the whole world righteousness, and for that end travelled even to the utmost bounds of the west; he at last suffered martyrdom, by the command of the Governors, and departed out of the world, and went unto his holy place; being a most eminent pattern of patience unto all ages.*

Nero was not permitted long to survive the martyrdom of Paul. The course of licentiousness, extravagance, and tyranny which he followed, arrived at its termination. The people were roused. Numerous conspiracies were formed against him; but they were generally discovered, and the persons implicated suffered the severest punishments. The most dangerous one was that of Piso, from which he was saved by the confession of a slave. The conspiracy of Galba proved more successful, who, when he learned that his design was known to Nero, immediately declared himself Emperor. The unpopularity of the tyrant favoured his cause, and the disaffection of the troops in Spain, where Galba was, and in Germany, with those in the metropolis, soon became universal. The Senate followed. Nero was desperate, and sought in vain for Spicillus, a gladiator, who could put him to death. Being disappointed in this, he ran out in a fit of frenzy, as though he would plunge in the Tiber; but his resolution failed. Desiring some private place in which he might collect his reason and his fortitude, Phaon, his freedman, tendered his house, four miles distant in the country, which Nero accepted; and, accompanied by four attendants, he fled, meanly apparelled and worse mounted. In this expeditious but short journey, Nero was terrified by a violent shaking of the earth, with vivid flashes of lightning which occurred; and on passing the Prætorian camp, he heard the fearful curses of the soldiers, and the shouts of good fortune and prosperity to the conspirator Galba. To prevent discovery, the fugitive party forsook the highway, and went through briers and bushes into a thicket of reeds, at the back of Phaon's house, where a hole was broken in the wall, through which Nero crept like a hedgehog, throwing himself on a wretched bed in one of the miserable apartments of the building. In the meanwhile the Senate assembled, and, pronouncing him an enemy to the state, condemned him to death, *more majorum;* and immediately despatched officers to discover his haunt, and to bring him alive. Hearing of his doom as declared by the Senate, he asked what *more majorum* meant, and what sort of punishment it was. On being informed that he was to be stripped naked, his head fixed in a pillory, and in that position scourged to death, after which his mangled remains were to be thrown from the Tarpeian rock, like the meanest malefactor; alarmed at his situation, he seized a couple of daggers, but, after examining their points, he coolly laid them on one side, pretending "that his fatal hour was not yet come." Now he intreated some one who was present to instruct him how to die, by killing himself first; and then, he condemned his own pusillanimity and want of courage; at length, hear-

* Clem. Rom. Epist. ad Corinth., sect. 5. Archbishop Wake's Translation. Fourth edit. 8vo., p. 5. London, 1737.

ing of the arrival of soldiers, under the orders of the Senate, he placed a dagger to his throat, with which, being assisted by his Secretary Epaphroditus, he inflicted a fatal wound. Such was the miserable end of Nero, who, by his iniquitous life, had brought upon himself all the misfortunes that could befall a Prince; and upon the state, all the calamities that could arise from unjust tyranny and internal convulsion. Never was satisfaction more unalloyed and complete than at the death of Nero. All persons congratulated each other on being delivered from a monster in human form; and the citizens, more strongly to indicate their joy, wore caps such as were generally used by slaves who had received their freedom. He reigned upwards of thirteen years, and was taken off in the prime of life, being in the thirty-second year of his age.*

CHAPTER V.

JUDE—*His Parentage—Tradition of Eusebius—Abgarus—Interview of Jude with him—Testimony of Jerome—Identity between Thaddeus and Jude—His Labours and Death—Grandchildren of Judas brought before Domitian, and why—Examined concerning their Views of Christ—Are despised by the Emperor—The Persecution ceases—Hegesippus—Tertullian's Statement respecting Domitian—* BARTHOLOMEW—*The same as Nathanael—His Birth and Discipleship—His Attempts to propagate the Faith—Socrates—Sophronius—Pantænus—The Story of the Gospel of Matthew in the Hebrew being found in India—Eusebius—Origin of the Legend—Is said to have visited Arabia—Reasonableness of this Idea—Escapes Martyrdom at Hierapolis—But is crucified at Albanople—Horrid Cruelty said to have been perpetrated at his Death—Parysatis—Fabulous Character of a Gospel bearing his Name, and repudiated—* THOMAS—*His Call to the Apostolate, and subsequent Labours—The Account of Thomas being the Apostle of India, considered—His Martyrdom—The Nestorians—Uncertainty of all Accounts respecting Thomas—* BARNABAS—*His Name and Parentage—His Conversion and Discipleship—How he, a Levite, held Possessions—His Sphere of Labour—An Associate of Paul—Afterwards they separated—His subsequent Success—And Martyrdom—* LUKE—*His Birth—Description of Antioch—His Education—Applies himself to Physic—The Profession of Physician among the Ancients—Luke a Jewish Proselyte—Is converted to the Faith, and attends upon Paul—His subsequent History, and supposed Martyrdom—* SIMON—*His Name—Account of the Jewish Zealots—Their dangerous Character—His Labours—And Death—The Coadjutors of the Apostles suffer—Philemon and his Wife Appia—Vitalis and Valeria—Theodoret—The despotic Character of Nero's Reign—Beneficial Effects of the Neronian Persecution—* DOMITIAN—*His Character—Both persecuted the Christians on the same Principle—Slanders and false Accusations of—Edict against them—Compelled to accuse themselves—Various Modes of Torture—Testimony of Justin Martyr—Flavius Clemens—His Character—Cause of his Offence—His honourable Situation—Is put to Death, and his Wife banished—Descendants of David still persecuted—* JOHN *the beloved Disciple—His Views and Prospects—Report of his having been immersed in boiling Oil—Doubts respecting the Fact—His Banishment—Patmos—Description of the Island—*

* Tillemont's Hist. des Empereurs, tom. i., p. 329. Quarto. Paris, 1700; Echard's Roman History, vol. ii., pp. 149, 150. 8vo. London, 1719. Taciti Annal., lib. xvi., Append., cap. 14. Suetonius, in Nerone, sect. 49.

Is released, and resides at Ephesus—DIONYSIUS *the Arcopagite*—*Eusebius quoted*—*Athens*—*Arcopagus*—*Dionysius hears the Gospel*—*Paul the Apostle*—*Is instrumental in the Conversion of the Athenian*—*Dionysius is chosen Bishop of Athens*—*Fabulous Records of his subsequent History*—*His Martyrdom*—TIMOTHY—*His early Training*—*And Usefulness*—*The Attention of Paul*—*By whom he is addressed in two Epistles*—*Character of the People among whom he laboured*—*Hermodorus*—*Their idolatrous Festivals*—*In one of which Timothy is martyred*—*The Rebuke of the Ephesian Church in the Apocalypse*—NICOMEDES—*His Martyrdom*—*Circumstances leading to Domitian's Death*—*His Suspicions*—*And Assassination*—*Indignities offered to his Remains*—*Nerva*—*His Character and Death*—*Is succeeded by Trajan.*

OF JUDE little is recorded: with regard to his descent and parentage, he was of our Lord's kindred. Nicephorus recognises him as the son of Joseph, and brother to James, Bishop of Jerusalem. That there was a Jude in the number, is evident: "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?" (Matt. xiii. 55.) We are not informed as to the time of Jude's calling to the apostleship; and the only word that has been preserved, as having proceeded from his lips, is recorded in John's account of the parting discourses of our Lord to his disciples, on the eve of the day of crucifixion. Jesus was assuring his audience that the love of God should be the sign and reward of all who faithfully keep his commandments. "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" (John xiv. 22.) Jesus answered and said to him, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (Verse 23.) A natural inquiry, happily suggested, and satisfactorily answered.

Eusebius * relates that, soon after our Lord's ascension, Thomas despatched Thaddeus the Apostle to Abgarus, the Governor of Edessa; where he healed diseases, wrought miracles, expounded the doctrines of Christianity, and converted Abgarus and his people to the faith; for all which pains, when the Governor offered him gifts and presents, he refused them with a noble scorn, telling him, the Apostles had little reason to receive from others what they had so freely relinquished themselves. A large account of this whole affair is extant in Eusebius, translated by him out of Syriac, from the records of the city of Edessa. This Thaddeus Jerome † expressly makes to be the Apostle Jude, though his bare authority is not in this case sufficient evidence; especially since Eusebius makes him no more than one of the seventy disciples, which he would scarce have done, had he been one of the twelve. He calls him, indeed, an Apostle; but that may imply no more than, according to the large acceptation of the word, that he was a disciple, a companion and an assistant to them, as we know the seventy eminently were. Nor is anything more common in ancient ecclesiastical writers, than for the first planters and

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. i., cap. 13.
† Hieron., Opera, tom. iv., Comment. in Matt. cap. x. Fol. Paris.

propagators of the Christian religion, in any country, to be honoured with the name and title of "Apostles." But, however this may be, at his first setting out to preach the Gospel, he is said to have gone up and down Judea and Galilee, then through Samaria into Idumea, and to the cities of Arabia, and the neighbouring countries, and, after, Syria and Mesopotamia. Nicephorus * says, that he came at last to Edessa, where Abgarus was Governor, and where the other Thaddeus had been before him. Here he perfected what the other had begun, and having, by his sermons and miracles, established the religion of our Saviour, died a peaceful and quiet death, though Dorotheus † makes him to be slain at Berytus. Many Greeks say that he was shot to death with arrows whilst he was tied to a cross.‡

That he was one of the married Apostles, appears from his grandchildren, of whom Eusebius speaks, and of whom Hegesippus gives the following account:—"There were yet living, of the family of our Lord, the grandchildren of Judas, called the brother of our Lord, according to the flesh. These were reported as being of the family of David, and were brought to Domitian by Evocatus. For the Emperor was as much alarmed at the appearance of Christ as Herod. He put the question whether they were of David's race, and they confessed that they were. He then asked them what property they had, and how much money they owned. And both of them answered, that they had between them only nine thousand *denarii*, and this they had not in silver, but in the value of a piece of land, containing only thirty-nine acres; from which they raised their taxes and supported themselves by their labour. Then they began to exhibit the hardness of their bodies, and the callosity formed by incessant labour on their hands, as evidence of their own industry. When asked, also, respecting Christ and his kingdom, what was its nature, and when and where it was to appear, they replied, that it was not a temporal nor an earthly empire, but celestial and angelic; that it would appear at the end of the world, when, coming in glory, he would judge the quick and dead, and give to every one according to his works. Upon which Domitian, despising them, made no reply; but, treating them with contempt as simpletons, commanded them to be dismissed; and, by a decree, ordered the persecution to cease. Thus delivered, they ruled the churches, both as witnesses and relatives of the Lord. When peace was established, they continued living even to the time of Trajan." Such is the statement of Hegesippus. Tertullian has also mentioned Domitian thus: "Domitian had once attempted the same against him, who was, in fact, a limb of Nero for cruelty; but I think, because he had as yet some remains of reason, he very soon suppressed the persecution, even recalling those whom he had exiled. But after Domitian had reigned fifteen years, and Nerva succeeded to the government, the Roman Senate decreed that the honours of Domitian should be revoked, and that those who had been unjustly expelled should

* Niceph., Hist. Eccles., lib. ii., cap. 40.
† Doroth. Synops. de Vit. et Mort. Apost.
‡ Cave's Lives of the Apostles. 8vo. edit. Oxford, 1840.

return to their homes, and have their goods restored."* But more of him anon.

BARTHOLOMEW or NATHANAEL.—Bartholomew is generally supposed to be the same individual who, in the Gospel according to John, is termed "Nathanael." The reason of this opinion is, that, in the first three Gospels, Philip and Bartholomew are constantly named together, and Nathanael is nowhere mentioned; whilst in the fourth, the names of Philip and Nathanael are similarly associated, and nothing is said of Bartholomew. Nathanael is therefore considered to be his real name, and Bartholomew indicative only of his filial relationship. Very brief notices are recorded of this Apostle. He is said to have been of Cana, in Galilee, a small town which stood about mid-distant between the lake of Gennesaret and the Mediterranean; but the circumstances of his call show that he was then with Philip at or near Bethabara. Philip, after having been summoned by our Lord to the discipleship, sought to introduce Nathanael to an enjoyment of like honours, and invited him to become a follower of the Messiah, foretold by Moses and the Prophets. On hearing that Nazareth was the place of his nativity, Nathanael sneeringly inquired, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" To this question Philip answered by the simple proposition, "Come and see;" wisely judging, that no answer would be able to remove the prejudice of his friend so well as a personal observation of the character and proceedings of the Nazarene himself. The words with which our Saviour greeted the visitant, even before a personal introduction had taken place, furnish us with a most exalted testimonial of the excellency of his character, and one of the most distinguishing traits of his qualifications as an Apostle: "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" (John i. 47.) Surprised at this address from one whom he had never seen, Nathanael inquired, "Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." The fig-trees of Palestine, presenting a very umbrageous appearance, were often used in the warm season as places of retirement either in company for conversation, or in solitude for meditation and prayer;† and doubtless it was in the latter occupation Nathanael was employed, removed, as he supposed he was, from all external observation, when Jesus beheld him. The eye that could pierce the shades of darkness on the boisterous waves of Galilee, that can penetrate appearances, however plausible, and move through mazes, however mysterious, could easily look through the thick, leafy veil of the fig-tree, and observe the secret actions of this guileless Israelite, who, struck with sudden and absolute conviction, tendered our Lord an unhesitating and sincere allegiance and service.

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. iii., cap. 20.

† That conversation, meditation, reading, prayer, &c., were carried on under fig-trees, is certain from the numerous examples produced from the Rabbinical writers by Lightfoot and Schoettgen.

With regard to the attempts which were made by Bartholomew to propagate the faith of the Redeemer, feeble and scanty are the records extant on which we can rely. Socrates * informs us, that he travelled as far as India, bordering on Ethiopia, meaning, no doubt, the Asian Ethiopia. Sophronius asserts the same; and, also, that he left behind him a copy of the Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew, of which report Eusebius, the father of ecclesiastical history, gives a full relation. He states that Pantænus, a man of great learning, and indefatigable zeal in the cause of truth, was constituted a herald of the Gospel to the nations of the east, and penetrated as far as India, where he found many who were acquainted with the doctrines of Christianity, having been instructed therein from the Gospel of Matthew, which Bartholomew, years before, had left among the natives.† Notwithstanding these traditional accounts, it is, after all, very problematical whether Bartholomew ever was in India. Eusebius does not name that Apostle in his account of the division of the heathen nations to which Socrates refers; and it is only incidentally that he alludes, in a subsequent part of his history, to the journey in question. Socrates also mentions it without reference to any authority for his assertion, and states, at the same time, that India was not enlightened with the doctrines of Christianity before the reign of Constantine the Great. The whole appears to have originated in the rumour of the discovery of the manuscript of Matthew's Gospel, about the commencement of the third century. Eusebius, it will be observed, does not attempt to corroborate the report; Du Pin ‡ and others speak of it as unworthy of notice; and Milner, § though he deemed it worth mentioning as a current tradition, doubted its truth. Such a statement, however, would be received without hesitation in a credulous age; and those who believed it would find little difficulty in imagining, or crediting, the story of Bartholomew's visit to India, ‖ in order to account for this alleged discovery. ¶

Some scarce vestiges of history, floating in the atmosphere of eccle-

* Socratis Hist. Eccles., lib. i., cap. 19.

† Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 10.

‡ Du Pin, Eccles. Hist., vol. i., p. 77. Folio. Dublin edit., 1723.

§ Milner's Church History, cent. iii., chap. iii., vol. i., p. 313. 8vo. edit. York, 1794.

‖ The title of "Indians" is applied by ancient writers to so many different nations, that it is difficult to determine the seat of Bartholomew's labours. Mosheim, with whom Neander agrees, is of opinion that it was part of Arabia Felix, inhabited by Jews, to whom alone a Hebrew Gospel could be of any service. If any be at the pains of comparing the testimony of olden authors respecting that India, to which a knowledge of Christ and his word was first imparted by Bartholomew, not a shadow of doubt can remain, says Mosheim, as to its having been Arabia Felix, which, we well know, was one of these countries included under the title of India by the ancients. (Mosheim's Commentaries, vol. ii., pp. 6—8; Tillemont Memoires, tom. ii., p. 381. 4to. Paris, 1693.) "Bartholomew is said to have preached in India; and if Eusebius gave this anecdote on the authority of Pantænus himself, it is certainly entitled to some credit, since Pantænus visited the same country after an interval of not more than one hundred years; but the evidence of later writers would rather incline us to understand by India, the country south of Persia, and perhaps Arabia Felix." (Burton's Lect. on the Eccles. Hist. of the First Century, p. 331.)

¶ Hough's History of Christianity in India, vol. i., p. 32. 8vo. edit. London, 1839.

siastical tradition, record, that, after the dispersion of the Apostles, Bartholomew went to Arabia, where he preached till nearly the close of his life. In this account there rests some probability. It is well known that many of the Jews, and especially after the destruction of Jerusalem, located along the eastern coast of the Red Sea, where they continued for centuries. Nothing can be more reasonable than to suppose, that after the fury of war had desolated their fatherland, many of the Christian Jews sought an asylum in the peaceful regions of Arabia Felix; and that, in company with these refugees, the "Israelite, in whom was no guile," journeyed, in order to devote the rest of his life to apostolic labours in that distant country, where those of his fellow-wanderers, who had believed in Christ, would need the support and counsel of one of the divinely-commissioned Ministers of the Gospel. The Israelites, who still rejected the truth, would present objects of great importance in the estimation of the Apostle. The visible glories of the ancient covenant had departed, and the dogmatic influence of the teachers of the law had lost much of its persecuting and bigoted spirit: it might reasonably be expected, that the Jews would be led more justly to appreciate, and more readily to embrace, a spiritual faith, and a simple creed.

After having been some time engaged in Arabia Felix preaching the word, he went to the north-western parts of Asia. At Hierapolis, in Phrygia, he is supposed to have been a coadjutor of Philip, instructing the inhabitants in the principles of Christianity. It was in this city, we are told, that the enraged magistracy doomed him and Philip to martyrdom, and that Bartholomew was literally fastened to the cross; but a sudden impression coming upon the murderers, that the vengeance of heaven would ere long revenge the death of the Apostle, he was taken down, and dismissed. From thence he is said to have travelled into Lycaonia, where he instructed and taught the people the truths of the Gospel. His last journey was to Albanople, in Armenia, "a city wholly given to idolatry:" he was arrested by the Governor of the place, and commanded to be crucified,* a punishment which he patiently suffered, comforting and confirming the Gentile converts to the last moment of his life. Some of the accounts state,† that he was crucified with his head downwards; others, that he was flayed, and his skin first taken off; which might consist with the idea of his crucifixion, excoriation being a punishment not only common in Egypt, but also in Persia;‡ and Plutarch records the instance of Mesabates the Persian Eunuch, who, "as soon as he was in the power of Parysatis, and before the King had the least suspicion of the vengeance she designed, was delivered up to the executioners, who were commanded to flay him alive, to fix his body upon three stakes, and to stretch out his skin separately from it."§

* The manner, as well as the date, of this Apostle's death, though many different statements are given in the Martyrologies, must on these accounts be looked upon as altogether uncertain. (Dr. Burton.)

† Hippolyt. de Apost. apud Baron. in Not. ad Martyr. Ad August. 25. Quarto. Colon., 1603.

‡ Ammiani Marcellini lib. xxviii., cap. 6. Folio. Paris, 1681.

§ Plutarch's Lives. In Vit. Artaxerx., vol. vi., p. 128. Edinburgh, 1795.

From these barbarians such a piece of horrid cruelty, as was inflicted upon Bartholomew, might have been derived. Heretics hesitated not to persecute his memory after death, as much as Heathens during his life-time, by fabricating and propagating a fabulous Gospel which, they affirmed, had been written by himself. Gelasius,* the Bishop of Rome, justly stigmatized the production as apocryphal, and unworthy the name of that Apostle.†

THOMAS, the Apostle, otherwise called "Didymus," must be placed in nearly the same category as Bartholomew. The history of the Gospel takes very little notice either of his country or kindred. He appears to have been a Jew, and, in all probability, a Galilean; and, in company with the rest, was called to be an Apostle. When our Saviour ascended on high, he partook of those miraculous gifts which were vouchsafed unto the companions of our Lord; and having, it is said, received some divine intimation, despatched Thaddeus (whom many suppose to have been the Apostle Jude) to Abgarus, the Governor of Edessa, to heal him of an inveterate disease, and to convert him to the faith.‡ The apostolical province assigned to Thomas, according to Eusebius, was Parthia; § after which he is said to have preached the Gospel to the Medes, Persians, Hyrcanians, and Bactrians; and though at first he was the most weak and incredulous of all the apostolic company, he became, in the end, one of the most powerful, fervent, and successful Ministers of the cross. He is said to have found his way into India, where, we are told by Nicephorus, that at first he was unwilling to go, on account of the rude and barbarous manners of the inhabitants; but being encouraged by the Lord in a vision, he took up his cross, and went.‖ He is supposed, by those who credit this account, to have travelled a great way into the East; and by gentleness and mild persuasions, he calmly instructed the people in the principles of Christianity, and brought them from the grossest errors to the cordial belief of the religion of Christ.¶

Such is the traditional record which attributes to Thomas the introduction of Christianity into India. It is undoubtedly of early

* Corpus Juris Canonici, a Petro Pithœo et Franc. Pithœo, tom i., part i., distinct. xv., cap. iii., sect. 27. Colon., 1779.

† The tales which have been told with regard to the remains of Bartholomew are as veritable as the account of his martyrdom. It is stated that they were removed to Daras, a city on the borders of Persia; then to Liparis, one of the Æolian isles; then to Benevento in Italy; and, last of all, to Rome. Since which time they have been, according to Alban Butler, deposited in a monument of porphyry, under the high altar in the church of Bartholomew, in the isle of the Tiber, at Rome. An arm of this Apostle's body is said to have been sent as a present by the Bishop of Benevento to Edward the Confessor, and by him bestowed on the cathedral church of Canterbury. Among the statues which adorn the cathedral at Milan, none is so much admired as one of this Apostle having been flayed alive, representing the muscles, veins, and other parts with an inimitable softness.

‡ The Syrian Churches; their early History, Liturgies, and Literature. With a literal Translation of the Four Gospels, &c. By the Rev. J. W. Etheridge, pp. 36—39. 12mo. London, 1846.

§ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. iii., cap. 1.

‖ Turner's Anglo-Saxons, vol. ii., p. 147. 8vo. edit. London, 1828.

¶ Cave's Lives of the Apostles. 8vo. edit. Oxford, 1840.

date; but unworthy of support. Eusebius does not mention it: he says, that tradition assigns to Thomas the region of Parthia, but he nowhere alludes to this Apostle travelling and preaching in India. Socrates is also equally silent; and the same may be said of all the early historians of the church. Cave takes his account of the journeys of Thomas in the East from Nicephorus, a Greek historian of the fourteenth century, and also from the Portuguese, "in want," as he acknowledges, "of better testimony from antiquity." La Croze,* the Benedictine, has drawn up the following account of this tradition from all the authorities he could collect; but declares, at the same time, that it does not appear to be worthy of credit. "In the division of all the parts of the world, which was made among the holy Apostles, India fell to the lot of St. Thomas, who, after having established Christianity in Arabia Felix, and in the island of Dioscoride, now called Socotora, arrived at Cranganore, where the principal King of the coast of Malabar resided. It was there that the fabulous adventures happened, of which we read in this Apostle's life, written by the pretended Abdias, King of Babylon. The holy Apostle, having established many churches at Cranganore, passed to Coulan, (Quilon,) a celebrated town of the same coast, where he converted many persons to Christianity. Having departed to the other coast, now known by the name of Coromandel, he stopped at Meliapore, a town which the Europeans call St. Thomé, where he is said to have converted the King and all the people. He went from thence to China, and remained in a town called Camballé, where he made numerous conversions, and built many churches. St. Thomas returned from China to Meliapore, where the great success that attended his labours among the Heathen excited against him the hatred and envy of two of the Bramhans, the Priests of the idolatrous superstition of India. These two men stirred up the people, who combined to stone the holy Apostle. After his execution, one of the Bramhans, observing that he still breathed, pierced him with a lance, which put an end to his life. I shall not lose time," says this historian, "in refuting this narration of the death of the holy Apostle, which is not apparently less fabulous, than the coming of St. Thomas into India." †

The assertion of La Croze will, by many, be considered of a too general and sweeping character. The tradition, that he travelled into India, had appeared to receive some support in modern times by the interesting researches ‡ which have brought to light some Christian inhabitants on the coast of Malabar; and we are told that these persons appeal to the Apostle Thomas as their founder. Nevertheless, there is reason to doubt the accuracy of this opinion. Theodoret § speaks of Thomas as a disciple of Manes, who

* Histoire du Christianisme des Indes.

† Hough's Christianity in India, vol. ii., pp. 33—35.

‡ Christian Researches in Asia: with Notices of the Translation of the Scriptures into the Oriental Languages. By the Rev. Claudius Buchanan, D.D. Fourth edit. 8vo. London, 1811.

§ "Habuit autem hic Manes ab initio discipulos tres, Aldam, Thomam, et Hermam. Et Aldam quidem ad prædicandum misit in Syriam, ad Indos vero Thomam." (Theo-

carried his Master's doctrines into India; and since the religion of Christ always formed part of Manicheism, it is possible that this Thomas may have been confounded with the Apostle. There is also evidence of another Thomas having been sent, about the year 800, by the Patriarch of Babylon, to carry the Gospel into India; and since the Christians who have lately been discovered in that country are Nestorians, it is not improbable that the Nestorian patriarchs of Babylon were the original founders of their church.* There is, therefore, very little evidence of the Apostle Thomas having penetrated as far as India, if we take that term in its literal signification; but the tradition which Origen had heard in the third century may, perhaps, incline us to believe that the Gospel was carried by this Apostle into the interior of Asia. A tradition, however, floating down, unwritten, for fifteen centuries, cannot be received as good evidence; and the more minute such stories are, the more suspicious are they in their general character for truth. On the same principle we feel inclined to receive with hesitation the somewhat earlier tradition preserved by Clement of Alexandria, that Thomas the Apostle did not suffer martyrdom; and the stories which are related of his having been put to death in India, do not rest upon any authority.

Barnabas.—The original name of this Apostle, for with this title Luke and many of the ancients honour him, was Joses. It was given, doubtless, at his circumcision, in honour of Joseph, one of the great patriarchs of the Jewish nation, to which, having embraced Christianity, the Apostles added the name of Barnabas, signifying "the son of prophecy," being eminent for prophetic gifts and endowments; or, "the son of consolation," as denoting his admirable skill in "binding up the broken hearted," and in "comforting those that mourn." He was born in Cyprus, a celebrated island in the Mediterranean, lying between Cilicia, Syria, and Egypt. He was descended from the tribe of Levi, and the line of the priesthood, which rendered his conversion to Christianity the more remarkable, as all surrounding interests concurred to increase his prejudices against the faith of Christ. He is said to have been brought up in the knowledge of the law at the feet of Gamaliel, together with Paul, and thus laid the foundation of that acquaintance which existed in after-life between them. He was a constant spectator of our Saviour's miracles, and among the rest witnessed him cure the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, by which he was fully convinced of the power and Godhead

doreti Opera, tom. iv., part i., Hæret. Fabul. Compend., lib. i., De Manete, p. 321, Edit. 8vo. Halæ.)

* Much valuable testimony has been given by Dr. Buchanan, who, in modern times, has traced out all these traditions on the spot, and has given a full account of the "Christians of St. Thomas," in his "Researches." It is, however, manifest from the statements of the indefatigable author, that these Christians derived their faith from some other than an apostolic source. The fact that they maintain the Nestorian heresy gives strong reason for supposing that Christianity was not propagated among them till after the time of that heresiarch. They also have, in all their churches, the picture of the Virgin Mary, and the child Jesus, a circumstance which still further condemns their pretensions; for what Protestant is willing to believe that an apostolic founder could have countenanced a superstition so nearly approaching to idolatry?

of the Redeemer, and induced to become a fervent and sincere disciple. Clement of Alexandria expressly affirms that he was one of the seventy; and that after the ascension of our Lord, when the necessities of the church so greatly increased, and stood in need of extraordinary supplies, he, according to the free and generous spirit of the primitive church, having goods, "sold them, and laid the money at the Apostles' feet." *

The sphere of Barnabas was very soon to be much enlarged. The persecution in which Stephen fell, scattered Preachers of the Gospel far and wide. Paul and Barnabas were constantly employed, and, as companions, they cordially and successfully laboured for the hope of Israel. After they had continued for some time teaching and preaching the word, Paul proposed to Barnabas that they should revisit the churches which they had founded. The latter gladly consented; but when he proposed to take Mark with them, who had deserted them on a former occasion, he was met with a direct refusal. Without doubt, he would not have made the proposal, had he not been assured of Mark's sincere repentance: he therefore was anxious to afford the defaulter an opportunity of repairing his error. Both Paul and Barnabas were men of ardent temperament, open-hearted and generous; they concealed neither thought nor feeling from each other; consequently, the debate ran high between them. The circuit of visitation was divided. Paul took the upper part, having with him Silas, going through Syria and Cilicia, and northward still, and on new ground, through Phrygia and Galatia, until he had commission from the Holy Ghost to pass into Greece. Barnabas, taking with him Mark, sailed, as before, for Cyprus, and thence probably visited the sea-coast of Pamphylia; but there the narrative of Scripture leaves him. If he returned to Antioch, it was not for any permanent abode; since it is evident, from Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. ix. 6,) that Barnabas, like himself, was journeying, and founding or visiting churches; and still maintained a practice which he had begun with him, of earning his livelihood by the work of his own hands. According to tradition, he testified to the faith of Jesus Christ by his death.†

All is doubtful that is henceforward said of Barnabas. Dorotheus, and others, suppose that he visited Rome, and first preached the Gospel there. Of this, however, the Romish annalist, Baronius, will not hear, inasmuch as the assertion militates against the oft-repeated tale of Peter having originally proclaimed the truth in that city. The Grecian writers say that he went to Alexandria, and thence into various parts of Judea, and ultimately into Cyprus, where he was instrumental in the conversion of many from darkness unto light; until some Jews, arriving in Salamis from Syria, attacked him while

* If it be inquired how a Levite came by lands and possessions when the Mosaic law allowed them no particular portions but what were made by public provision, it needs no other answer than to suppose that this estate was his patrimonial inheritance in Cyprus, where the Jewish constitutions did not take place; and surely an estate it was of considerable value, and the parting with it a greater charity than ordinary, otherwise the sacred historian would not have made such a particular remark concerning it. (Dr. Care.)

† Evans's Scripture Biography, p. 356.

he was disputing in the synagogue, confined him for the night in some secure part of the sacred place, and when the morning came, they drew him forth and slew him with stones. Thus, it is stated, Barnabas suffered; the only instance given in the Gospel of one of the tribe of Levi becoming its Minister. He, like unto Bartholomew, was "an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile." He was worthy of being the friend and companion of Paul; and the title he obtained from the Apostles, shows that he had a mouth and wisdom which the adversary could neither gainsay nor resist.

LUKE was born at Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, eminent in history for the salubrity of its situation, the fertility of the soil, and the wealth of its commerce, but above all, in the estimation of the church, because it was here the disciples were first called Christians. In Antioch existed an university, replenished with schools of learning, and favoured with teachers in the several branches of science and art, so that Luke had every opportunity of receiving an ingenuous and liberal education. It is said, that he studied not only at Antioch, but also in the various schools of Egypt and Greece; and being thus furnished from the numerous preparatory institutions of philosophy, he more particularly applied himself to physic, for which the Grecian schools were celebrated. Physicians of that remote period were not accustomed to rise to that eminence in society as in the present day; frequently they held no higher rank in society than a servant or slave, great men keeping one or more of this profession in their house: hence, therefore, many have imagined that Luke, notwithstanding all his accomplishments, was but a slave in Rome, where he professed medicine and practised it, and being subsequently manumitted, returned into his own country. The higher ranks of Roman society were disinclined to the practice of medicine, which they generally left to their freedmen.* Besides his abilities in physic, he is said to have been skilful in painting! This is perhaps one of the most wretched fictions which the most wild and romantic genius of Popery could possibly have invented!† Luke was a Jewish prose-

* "Medicinam factitasse, manumissum." (Quint. Instit. vii. 2, 27.) "Mitto præterea cum eo ex servis meis medicum," &c.; "Besides, I sent with him a Physician from among my servants." (Suet. *Calig.*, sect. 8.) Since Luke was a Physician, we must suppose that he was a man of education. Only such slaves as had some talent were taught the *artes ingenuæ*, "liberal arts." The freedman Antonius Musa, having worked a cure upon Augustus, was raised to the equestrian order, and a statue was erected in honour of him in the temple of Æsculapius. From the time of Antoninus Pius, and perhaps earlier, there was in every city a *Collegium Archiatrorum*, "a college of Physicians," to whom was intrusted the examination of medical men, and who, probably, required of them some knowledge of the writings of Hippocrates. (Kitto.)

† Dr. Cave appears disposed to credit the legends which speak of the pictorial genius of the Evangelist. He says, "There are no less than three or four several pieces still in being, pretended to have been drawn with his own hand: a tradition which Gretzer, the Jesuit, endeavours to defend; though his authors, in respect of credit or antiquity, deserve very little esteem or value. Of more authority with me," says the biographer, "would be an ancient inscription found in a vault near the church of St. Mary, *in via lata* at Rome, supposed to have been the place where St. Paul dwelt, wherein mention is made of a picture of the blessed Virgin," *una ex vii. ab Luca depictis*, "being one of the seven painted by St. Luke."

lyte, and brought to the knowledge of the truth through the instrumentality of Paul, with whom he was afterward a constant companion and fellow-labourer. He was with the Apostle at his several arraignments in Jerusalem, accompanied him in his dangerous voyage to Rome, in which city he still attended on him, administering to his necessities, and supplying those ministerial offices which the confinement of Paul did not allow him to perform himself. While he continued in Rome attending on the Apostle, he wrote the Gospel which bears his name, which he dedicated to Theophilus, some distinguished Roman or Greek, who had embraced the truth, and who requested an account of the facts which are therein related.

After Paul was set at liberty, Luke again accompanied him in the rest of his travels, and returned with him to Rome, where he was a mournful spectator of the Apostle's martyrdom. What became of the Evangelist after the death of the Apostle, we know not: some are of opinion that he returned into the East, and converted many to the faith; others imagine that he travelled into Galatia, Dalmatia, Italy, and Macedonia, where he laboured in the midst of great peril and difficulty to discharge the trust which was committed to him. Ancient writers manifest great uncertainty, with regard to the time and manner of his death; some asserting that he died in Egypt, others in Greece, the Roman martyrology* in Bithynia, and Dorotheus at Ephesus. Some declare that he died a natural, and others a violent, death. Neither Eusebius nor Jerome notices his decease at all. Nicephorus Callistus, with a few others, expressly certify his martyrdom. The former relates,† that, arriving in Greece, he successfully preached, and baptized many who made profession of faith in Christ, until a party of infidels attacked him, and dragged him forth to put him to death: being in want of a cross, they hanged him on an olive-tree, in the eighty-fourth year of his age. His body was subsequently moved, it is said by Constantine, or by his son Constantius, to Constantinople, and interred in the church which had recently been erected to the memory of the Apostles.

SIMON, surnamed Zelotes, one of the twelve Apostles. (Luke vi. 15; Acts i. 13.)—Matthew and Mark, in giving the names of the Apostles, the only occasion on which they mention him, term him "Simon the Canaanite." (Matt. x. 4; Mark iii. 18.) This, however, is not, as is usually the case, to be taken for a Gentile name, but is merely an Aramaic word, signifying "zeal," and therefore of the same meaning as "Zelotes." This name may be faithfully translated by its English derivative "zealot," and has an interpretation deeply involved in some of the most bloody scenes in the history of the Jews, down to the days of the Apostles. Josephus speaks of them as forming "the fourth sect of Jewish philosophy,"‡ and as distinguished from the Pharisees chiefly by a quenchless love of

* Baronii Martyrol. Rom. Oct. 18.

† Nicephori Callisti Eccles. Hist., lib. ii., cap. 43, tom. i., p. 210. Fol. Paris, 1630.

‡ Joseph. Antiq., lib. xviii., cap. i., sect. i.

liberty, and an utter contempt of death. Their leading tenet was the unlawfulness of paying tribute to the Romans, as being a violation of the theocratic constitution. They viewed themselves as the successors of Phinehas, who did immediate execution upon Zimri and Cozbi: (Num. xxv. 11—13:) in imitation of whom, these men assumed the office of inflicting judgment in all extraordinary cases, and that not only by the connivance, but with the permission, of both rulers and people, till in after-times, under a pretence of this, their zeal degenerated into all manner of licentiousness and extravagance, so that they became the pests of the commonwealth, and by constantly prompting the people to throw off the Roman yoke, and to vindicate their native liberty, they induced that power to break in upon them to their utter and irrecoverable ruin. The Jewish historian gives a full account of them, and bewails the great devastation which they occasioned.* He says, that they did not scruple to kill any, even the prime of the nobility, under the pretence of corresponding with the Romans, and betraying the freedom of the country. In a word, during the last days of the Jewish polity, the zealots were lawless brigands or *guerrillas*, the scourge and terror of the land. This party, we have reason to believe, if it were in existence during our Saviour's sojourn on earth, had not arrived at this state of insubordination, and less reason is there for supposing that Simon derived his surname from any connexion with that party. It was either characteristic of his general conduct, or had reference to some particular occasion in which he manifested diligence and ardour in some righteous cause.

Having been invested with the apostolical office, no further mention is made of him in the inspired volume. He remained with the Apostles until the dispersion, and then zealously applied himself to the duty which lay before him. He is said to have directed his journey towards Egypt, Cyrene, and Africa. Here he preached and wrought miracles, and, after surmounting numerous difficulties, suffered martyrdom for the sake of Christ.† Some of the Martyrologies extant say, that Jude and Simon went together into Mesopotamia, where they both received the martyr's crown.

In the meanwhile the indefatigable and self-denying coadjutors of the Apostles did not remain unscathed in the midst of the storm which raged around. Anxious to follow the example of Christ, and the footsteps of those who had been the instruments of their conversion from sin to holiness, they had trials also of cruel mockings, and of bonds and imprisonment. Very few of the names of the martyrs who suffered immediately before or after the execution of Peter and Paul have been handed down to posterity: sufficient it is for them that their judgment is with the Lord, and their reward with their God. (Isai. xlix. 4.) Among these, we notice Ananias of Damascus,

* Joseph. De Bello Jud., lib. iv., cap. 3—6; lib. vii., cap. 8.

† Niceph. Callist. Eccles. Hist., lib. ii., cap. 40. The Greek Menology asserts, that Simon went ultimately into Britain, and, having enlightened the minds of many with the doctrines of the Gospel, he was crucified by the infidels, and buried there.

who obtained the crown of martyrdom in that city; Erastus, the Chamberlain of Corinth, is said to have been left by Paul in Macedonia, and to have suffered martyrdom at Philippi; Aristarchus, a native of Thessalonica, who was with Paul in the disturbance raised by Demetrius the Silversmith, in which he suffered numerous insults from the populace, and was a partaker of the labours and perils of the Apostle in Ephesus, accompanied Paul into Greece, and from thence into Asia and Judea, and finally went with him to Rome, where it is stated he also was beheaded at the command of Nero; Trophimus, also, constantly accompanied his preceptor. It was upon his account that the Jews raised the riot in the temple against the Apostle, whom they would have killed, had not Lysias the Captain of the guard come to his rescue. His name does not again occur till after the first imprisonment of Paul. In one of the ensuing journeys of the Apostles, he remained behind at Miletus sick. (2 Tim. iv. 20.) This circumstance is regarded as furnishing a strong fact to show, that Paul was twice imprisoned at Rome; for Trophimus, in his first passage to Miletus, (Acts xx. 15,) was not left behind, but proceeded to Judea; after which we do not lose sight of Paul for one day, and know that he was not again at Miletus before his first imprisonment at Rome. Trophimus followed him to the imperial city, and, shortly after the death of Paul, suffered martyrdom at the command of Nero.

Philemon was a person of some distinction in the city of Colosse, who, during Paul's stay in Ephesus, heard him preach, and became a zealous and consistent disciple. Immediately after his conversion, he became a fellow-labourer in the cause of truth, and turned his house into a place of prayer, where the Christians were accustomed to meet for devotional purposes: it was under the roof * of Philemon, also, the Apostle resided when he visited Colosse. After having edified the church by his public ministrations, as well as by his unbounded charity, he, with his wife Appia, toward the latter end of Nero's reign, suffered martyrdom on a day that was dedicated to Diana, having fallen victims to the rage of the popular fury. Among the early martyrs, the names of Vitalis and Valeria have frequently been mentioned. The former lived in the reign of Nero, and had a command in the Roman army. He concealed his profession of Christianity for some time, that he might be more serviceable to the church during the heat of the persecution. On witnessing one of the victims of cruelty

* Theodoret speaks of having had this house pointed out to him so late as the fifth century. "Quinetiam domus ejus mansit usque in hodiernum diem." (Theod. Oper., tom. iii., Pref. ad Philem., p. 711.) It has been said, that Philemon was made Bishop of Colosse by Paul, an office which is ascribed by others to Epaphras; and this fact as well as the subsequent martyrdom of himself and wife at Colosse, are, perhaps, deserving of little belief. We know also the name of Archippus, who was a Deacon in the Colossian church; and if ecclesiastical traditions may be followed, Onesimus was raised to a still higher station in the church. A person of this name was certainly Bishop of Ephesus in the time of Ignatius; (Epist. ad Ephes., sect. 6;) and some writers have stated, that Timothy was succeeded by the former slave of Philemon; but this must be considered uncertain; and unless Onesimus was extremely young when converted by Paul, he could hardly have been Bishop of Ephesus at the commencement of the second century. Other accounts have represented him as Bishop of Berea in Macedonia; and they add, that he suffered martyrdom in the reign of Domitian.

and superstition tremble at the approach of death, he made an open confession of his attachment to the faith, and encouraged the suffering Christian so effectively, that he courageously laid down his life. Vitalis was speedily called to account for the declaration which he had made; and was forthwith condemned to the rack, his bones were broken, and he was buried alive. After the death of her husband, Valeria quitted Rome. While travelling on the road to Milan, she was stopped by a company of peasants, who were celebrating some festival in honour of a heathen deity; and, she refusing to comply with these superstitious ceremonies, was murdered.

During the first part of the reign of Nero, the government, although it still held in respect the old republican institutions, was in its administration perfectly despotic. The state centred in the person of the Emperor. This kind of hereditary autocracy is essentially selfish: it is content with averting or punishing plots against the person, or detecting and crushing conspiracies against the power, of the existing Monarch. To those more remote or secret changes, which are working in the depths of society, eventually, perhaps, threatening the existence of the monarchy, or the stability of all the social relations, it is blind or indifferent. It has neither sagacity to discern, intelligence to comprehend, nor even the disinterested zeal, for the perpetuation of its own despotism, to counteract such distant and contingent dangers. Of all innovations it is, in general, sensitively jealous; but they must be palpable and manifest, and directly clashing with the passions, or exciting the fears of the Sovereign. Even these are met by temporary measures. When an outcry was raised against the Egyptian religion as dangerous to public morality, an edict commanded the expulsion of its votaries from the city. When the superstition of the Emperor shuddered at the predictions of the mathematicians, the whole fraternity fell under the same interdict. When the public peace was disturbed by the dissensions among the Jewish population of Rome, the summary sentence of Claudius visited both Jews and Christians with the same indifferent severity. So the Neronian persecution was an accident arising out of the fire at Rome, no part of a systematic political plan for the suppression of foreign religions. It might have fallen on any other sect or body of men, who might have been designated as victims to appease the popular resentment. The provincial administrations would be actuated by the same principles as the central government, and be alike indifferent to the quiet progress of opinions, however dangerous to the existing order of things. Unless some breach of the public peace demanded their interference, they would rarely put forth their power; and, content with the maintenance of order, the regular collection of the revenue, the more rapacious with the punctual payment of their own exactions, the more enlightened with the improvement and embellishment of the cities under their charge, they would look on the rise and propagation of a new religion with no more concern than that of a new philosophic sect, particularly in the eastern part of the empire, where the religions were in general more foreign to the character of the Greek or Roman polytheism. The popular feeling

during this period would, only under peculiar circumstances, outstrip the activity of the government. Accustomed to the separate worship of the Jews, to them Christianity appeared at first only as a modification of that belief. Local jealousies or personal animosities might, in different places, excite a more active hostility: in Rome, it is evident that the people were only worked up to find inhuman delight in the sufferings of the Christians, by the misrepresentations of the government, by superstitious solicitude to find some victims to appease the angry gods, and that strange consolation of human misery, the delight of wreaking vengeance on whomsoever it can possibly implicate as the cause of the calamity.*

The spent wave of the Neronian persecution recovered sufficient force to sweep away those who were employed in reconstructing the shattered edifice of Christianity in Rome. But the Gospel ultimately advanced, and spread extensively among the inferior and middle orders of society. In many quarters, the strong revulsion of the public mind against Nero created great commiseration towards his innocent victims, so that the Christians were acquitted by the popular feeling of any real connexion with the fire at Rome.† Mr. Milman justly remarks, that "this persecution had the effect of raising the importance of Christianity, so as to force it upon the notice of many, who might otherwise have been ignorant of its existence; the new and peculiar fortitude with which the sufferers endured their unprecedented trials, would strongly recommend it to those who were dissatisfied with the moral power of their old religion; while, on the other hand, it was yet too feeble and obscure to provoke a systematic plan for its suppression."

From the death of Nero to the period in which Trajan ascended the throne of the Roman empire, the larger portion of time was occupied by the reign of Domitian. His father, Vespasian, from the comprehensive vigour of his mind, and his knowledge of the Jewish character and religion, was qualified in no small degree to estimate aright the present bearings and future prospects of the Christian faith. But having subdued Judea and destroyed the temple, he had reduced the forefathers of Christianity to such an enfeebled condition, as to lead all to anticipate either their entire extinction, by being mingled with the general population of the empire, and, in process of time, becoming absorbed, or, like the smoking flax, consumed in its own ashes. The name of Domitian is handed down, as that of the second persecutor of the Christians after Nero; and though the greater part of his reign was marked by cruelties, it seems to have been in his later years that his attention was turned to the professors of the Gospel. Eusebius speaks of this persecution forming a kind of sequel to the executions, banishments, and confiscations, which Domitian had practised against numbers of people of rank;‡ and the statement, perhaps, may be taken, not only as marking the time, but as serving in some degree to explain the cause, of the persecution. Nero tor-

* Milman's History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 52.
† Taciti Annales, lib. xv., cap. 44.
‡ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. iii., cap. 17.

tured the Christians that his own conduct might not be scrutinized. Domitian was influenced by a similar principle. While his cruel jealousy caused Rome to be saturated with patrician blood, it was desirable that some measure should be adopted to stifle the public indignation. Like his predecessor, he attacked the *exitiabilis superstitio*, and speedily secured the favour of a large and influential body of his subjects. His persecution of the Christians is referred to with sufficient plainness by several of the heathen historians. Suetonius and others allude to heavy contributions being levied upon the Jews, and upon those who professed that religion. There can be little doubt but those persons were Christians.*

The slanders and false accusations which were adduced against the Christians, exceed all manner of belief. They were accused of being enemies to the state, and especially to the Emperor, which was founded on their refusal to pay him divine honours, and to render adoration to his statue which he had erected in the capitol. Whatever crimes their malice could invent, or their suspicions conjecture, were imputed to the Christians. They charged them with offences of the most impious description, with "vile affections," with killing their own children, and eating men's flesh: many, in expectation of securing the possessions and goods of the accused, were ready falsely to charge them with any delinquency; and in order that such might not escape, the following was enacted:—"That if any Christian were brought before the Magistrates, let the crime be what it may, and the prisoner guilty or not guilty, he should not be discharged, unless he renounced his religion;" and, to render assurance doubly sure, they endeavoured to make the Christians their own accusers, by first imposing upon them an oath to speak the truth, and then interrogating them. The regard which they had for the sanctity of an oath, compelled them to speak the truth, their confession was held as sufficient evidence, and they were condemned to the torture and to death. The Magistrates were not satisfied with taking away the lives of the accused: the art of tormenting was in active requisition, to augment their misery,—loathsome and tedious imprisonments, scourging, tearing the nails and flesh from the hands and feet, stoning, burning in various ways, laying some on plates of iron red-hot, roasting some, broiling others on large gridirons, impalement, racks, throwing them to be devoured by wild beasts made hungry and fierce to worry them, tossing them on the horns of bulls, frying them on iron chairs, sawing them asunder, and many other kinds of cruel death, both lingering and severe: to others they were more merciful, by strangling them in the dungeon, or submitting them to the sword or the axe, the gibbet or the spear. Even after death the animosity of the persecutor was not satiated: frequently were their mangled remains thrown in heaps to be devoured by the dogs, rather than allow their

* Dio Cassius confirms this remark, when he is speaking of Acilius Glabrio, who was put to death in the fifteenth year of Domitian. His crime, according to the historians, was atheism; which, as we have seen, was equally alleged against Jews and Christians; and he states, that Glabrio, together with several other persons, about this time, had adopted Jewish manners.

friends to inter them. To all these Justin Martyr alluded in his address to Trypho the Jew: "None can terrify or move us from our faith in Christ; and it is daily seen, that when we are crucified, slain, cast to the wild beasts, or into the fire, or put to the greatest torments, yet we depart not from our faith; but the more cruelty is used against us, the more there are that come to piety, and faith in Christ; for as men cut the branches of the vine to make them fruitful, so is the vine planted by God and our Saviour, the church."

Christianity, however, forced itself upon the knowledge and fears of Domitian, in a quarter the least anticipated, the bosom of his own family.* Of his two cousins-german, the sons of Flavius Sabinus, the one fell an early victim to his jealous apprehensions. The other, Flavius Clemens, is described by epigrammatic biographers of the Cæsars, as a man whose indolence of character rendered him contemptible; and we know from later apologists, that one of the calumnies against the Christians was taken from their paying but little attention to public affairs.† This charge, in some respects, may be a true one; for, when an individual embraced the Gospel, he was compelled to abstain from many acts which were more or less connected with the rites and superstitions of Paganism. Clemens had given some offence of this kind; his relationship to the Emperor emboldened him also to speak his sentiments with freedom, which would also have a tendency to excite the too sensitive mind of the irascible Monarch. Enemies would not be wanting to urge Domitian to rid himself of such a troublesome friend; and hence the transition was comparatively easy to represent all the Christians as dangerous to the state. Clemens, instead of exciting the fears, enjoyed for some time the favour, of Domitian. He received in marriage Domitilla, the niece of the Emperor, his children were adopted as heirs to the throne, and himself obtained the Consulship; and if the tyrant had been sooner cut off, a Christian Prince might have been seated upon the throne of the Cæsars at the end of the first century. On a sudden, however, these harmless kinsmen became dangerous conspirators; they were arraigned on the unprecedented charge of atheism and Jewish manners; the husband, Clemens, was put to death; the wife, Domitilla, banished to the desert island either of Pontia or Pandataria. The crime of atheism was afterwards the common popular charge against the Christians, the charge to which in all ages those are exposed who are superior to the vulgar notion of the Deity. But it was a charge never advanced against Judaism: coupled, therefore, with that of Jewish manners, it is unintelligible, unless it refer to Christianity. Nor is it improbable that the contemptible want of energy, ascribed by Suetonius to Flavius Clemens, might be that unambitious superiority to the world which characterized the early Christian. Clemens had seen his brother cut off by the sudden and capricious fears of the tyrant; and his repugnance to enter on the same dangerous public career, in pursuit of honours which he de-

* Suetonius in Domit., cap. 15. Dion. Cassius, lib. lxvii., cap. 14. Euseb. Eccles. Hist., lib. iii., cap. 18.

† Tertull. Apologet., cap. xlii.

spised, if it had assumed the lofty language of philosophy, might have commanded the admiration of his contemporaries; but connected with a new religion, of which the sublimer notions and principles were altogether incomprehensible, only exposed him to their more contemptuous scorn. Neither in his case was it the peril apprehended from the progress of the faith, but the dangerous position of the individuals professing the religion, so near to the throne, which was fatal to Clemens and Domitilla. It was the pretext, not the cause, of their punishment.*

We have no means of judging, whether the search after the descendants of David, alluded to above,† was accompanied by any measures of cruelty against the Christians of Palestine; for the Emperor had heard, some way or other, that a man would arise from the relatives of Christ, bent upon revolution and political disturbance. There is, however, positive evidence, that the example which was set by Domitian in the capital, was followed in distant parts of the empire. The Christians of Asia Minor were exposed to severe trials. The usual alternative was offered them of sacrificing to an idol, or submitting to torture: and, while their heathen enemies threatened them on the one side, the Nicolaitans and different Gnostic sects were tempting them on the other, by teaching them that in such cases compliance was not a sin. This doctrine seduced many from the faith. The Apostle John witnessed, if he did not partake of, these sufferings. "He was the last whom the world beheld with the rays, as it were, of Christ's earthly presence remaining upon him. His death, therefore, forms an important epoch in the history of the church. And his Master blessed him ere he died, with an earnest of the promised victory of the Gospel. He who had stood at his cross, one of a little band of bewildered mourners, lived to see its opprobrious title, 'Jesus, the King of the Jews,' become a name of glory and holy boasting in the mouths of thousands and ten thousands. He lived to hear the sounds of the Gospel re-echoed to him from the farthest corners of the earth, while it sounded around him in the most celebrated city of Asia, in the very head-quarters of Heathenism, in the most sacred cell of its superstition. There, in its very capital, which was daily thronged and enriched by pilgrims to the great Diana, the pillars of whose temple were the gifts of Kings; in Ephesus itself, he beheld the church of Christ gradually extending its circle of conquest, and he

* Milman's History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 60.

† See page 274. In the account given by Eusebius, Mosheim sees nothing that can be deemed difficult of belief. From beginning to end it has all the appearance of a simple, unvarnished narrative. The fact, therefore, seems to have been, that some one, an enemy alike both to the Jews and the Christians, had suggested to the Emperor, that the Jews looked daily for a King to arise from amongst the posterity of David, who should give law to the whole earth; that the Christians in like manner expected that Christ would soon return, and establish for himself a grand and extensive dominion; and that, consequently, both Christians and Jews were to be regarded with a jealous eye, as persons harbouring views dangerous to the state, and only awaiting their opportunity to break out into open revolt. Insidious whispers of this kind would naturally prompt the tyrant to order, as we are told he did, that all the posterity of David should be sought after, and put to death; and that measures should be taken to give an equally effectual blow to any designs which might be entertained against him by the Christians. (Commentaries, vol. i., p. 191.)

himself was blessed with the charge of directing the energy of its administration. The beholder of the revelation in spirit was blessed with a sight in body too, more magnificent than ever Prophet's eye was allowed to see before. Under his own eyes the tabernacle of the church was daily spreading farther her curtains, and daily setting her stakes more strong. The Prophets, to whom had been vouchsafed a more distant prospect of the same end, (and such were Isaiah and Ezekiel and Daniel,) lived not to see the least trace of the beginning of the accomplishment of their predicted blessings. On the contrary, the porch-way of the temple of the future was dark indeed, and filled with a ghastly throng: desolation, captivity, famine, and the demons of plague, fire, and sword, sate there. But John's eye of flesh was advanced within the door, and saw the inner brightness. He beheld, indeed, the sword raised against the church; he saw it descend upon it. But it clave it, as it would water. A wave or two was raised, and then all was smooth and continuous again. The axe and brand were furiously wielded; but the temple of the church stood. Amid the devouring rage of the conflagration around, amid the blood flowing about it, still it was seen standing in tranquil majesty, still the blaze of the indwelling glory was seen illumining its windows, still the voices of thanksgiving and hosannas of victory were heard proceeding from within, unassailable by the powers without." *

In the persecution which now raged, JOHN did not remain entirely unharmed. He is reported to have been sent to Rome by the Proconsul of Asia, where he was thrown into a vessel of boiling oil, and came out unhurt. If local tradition were allowed to have any weight, we might believe, that some such event befell John at Rome; and Tertullian, who wrote at the end of the second century, does not appear to have entertained any doubt of the fact.† Mosheim, also, does not treat the story with contempt. The testimony of Tertullian, however, gives us a very brief and incidental notice of the circumstance: he was born within about fifty years of its occurrence, which is, after all, but feeble evidence in favour of the truth of such a fact.

The banishment of John to the Isle of Patmos by the command of Domitian, is too well authenticated to be disputed. The event is recorded by the unerring pen of revelation. The precise year in

* Evans's Scripture Biography, p. 261.

† All that Tertullian says on the subject is this: "Apostolus Johannes, posteaquam in oleum igneum demersus, nihil passus est, in insulam relegatur." (De Prescript. Hæret., cap. 36.) For nearly two hundred years, none of the fathers refers to this circumstance. Jerome speaks of it in two places; (Adv. Jovin., lib. i., cap. 14; and in his Comment., Matt. xx. 23;) and from these two sources, the other narrators of the account have taken it. Of the modern critics and historians, together with the great mass of Papists, several Protestants are quoted by Lampe, who strenuously defend the story: many who do not absolutely receive the statement as true, hesitate in deciding against it. The Magdeburg Centuriators represent it as being "very doubtful," *incertissimum est*. Irenæus and Sulpitius Severus are utterly silent on the subject, and Eusebius is as still as the grave in his Ecclesiastical History; but in his Demonstratio Evangelica, speaking of the suffering of the Apostles, of the death of Stephen, of James the brother of John, of James the brother of Christ, of Peter, and of Paul, he only says of the beloved disciple, "John is banished and sent into an island."

which it transpired is unknown: it is, however, ascertained, with some degree of certainty, to have occurred towards the close of the Emperor's reign. The place selected for his exile was a dreary, desert isle in the Ægean Sea, about twenty miles from the Asiatic coast, and thirty or forty south-west of Ephesus. It is at this day known by the observation of travellers to be a most singularly desolate place, exhibiting scarcely anything but bare rocks. On approaching the island the coast is found to be high, and to consist of a succession of capes which form so many ports, some of which are excellent. The only one in use is a deep bay, sheltered by high mountains on every side but one, where it is protected by a projecting cape. The town attached to this port is situated upon a high rocky mountain, rising immediately from the sea; and this, with the Scala below upon the shore, consisting of some shops and houses, forms the only inhabited site of the island. There is still shown a natural grotto in the rock where it is said John saw his visions,* and wrote "the Revelation." In this isolated spot the aged Apostle was doomed to pass lonely months, at a distance from all the enjoyments of social intercourse and Christian communion. Later writers have asserted that he was condemned to work in the mines or quarries, a punishment which we are aware was frequently inflicted upon the Christians; but, probably, the great age of John at this period exempted him from that toil. There are also traditions, that he converted the inhabitants of the island to Christianity; a fact which in itself is not improbable, but which does not rest on sufficient authority. John's imprisonment, probably, terminated when Domitian died. He appears to have returned to Ephesus. For many years the church in that city had the benefit of his superintendence; but Clement of Alexandria speaks of his taking journeys into the neighbouring district to appoint Bishops, and to settle the constitution of churches, &c. The senility of John unfitted him for active duties of this kind. Among the Bishops appointed by the Apostle about this period, must be placed Polycarp, who filled the see of Smyrna; but although the date of his appointment is uncertain, we have the testimony of Irenæus, that the Apostle and Polycarp were personally known to each other.† The latter years of John's life appear to have been spent in comparative peace, free from all molestation by his heathen adversaries.

Among those who suffered during the sanguinary reign of Domitian, was DIONYSIUS the Areopagite. All that we know of him on

* "We saw the peaks of its two prominent hills; but our course did not lie very near it. Still it was intensely interesting to get even a glance of that remarkable spot where the beloved disciple saw the visions of God, the spot, too, where the Saviour was seen, and his voice heard, for the last time till he come again. It is the only spot in Europe where the Son of man showed himself in his humanity. John's eye often rested on the mountains and islands among which we were now passing, and on the shores and waves of this great sea; and often, after the vision was past, these natural features of his place of exile would refresh his spirit, recalling to his mind how 'he stood on the sand of the sea,' and how he had seen that 'every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.'" (Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews, vol. ii., p. 100.)

† Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., p. 372.

any credible authority, beyond the short notice of Scripture, amounts to all that Eusebius seems to have known, who tells us, on the authority of Dionysius of Corinth, who flourished about the second century, that he was first Bishop of Athens. He was an Athenian, and that title alone gives him a claim upon our interest and curiosity. But he was thrown upon days when that city had ceased to dwell in a halo of intellectual glory, when she was shorn of her boasted splendour and freedom, and when she was quietly reposing, as a provincial town, under the wing of Roman dominion. Her schools of philosophy yet survived, and inherited all the contentiousness, though not the genius, of olden time. Among these the court of Areopagus* retained much of its former reputation, and the situation of an Areopagite Judge was esteemed the most prized among civil offices. Among the latter may be classed Dionysius. One day, as he was on the Hill of Mars, where his court was held, and where also was the great resort of the upper class of citizens and foreigners, he beheld a crowd coming up from the lower part of the city. They brought with them a person, whom, after having placed within the centre of the spot, they called upon to speak. Moved by curiosity, Dionysius joined the throng, which he found to contain the better sort, including philosophers with their disciples; and on inquiring who the speaker might be, was told that he was a teacher of new gods. This was none other than Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles. In a neat and eloquent discourse, delivered not with greater freedom of mind than strength of reason, he plainly demonstrated the folly and absurdity of those many vain deities whom they blindly worshipped; explained to them that infinite and eternal Being who made and governed the world, and the obligations he had laid upon all mankind to worship and adore Him; and especially how he had increased all the former obligations to gratitude and obedience, by sending his Son to procure and proclaim so glorious a scheme of salvation to a ruined world. Whilst many received the testimony of Paul with laughter and scorn, others were convinced of the reasonableness and divinity of the Christian faith. The attention of Dionysius was deeply engaged. He had never heard man speak like this man. The orator delivered himself with the authority of an Ambassador from the Most High. He announced the truth in all simplicity, as if he believed what he said. When the Preacher arrived at the touchstone of belief and unbelief, of those who were to be saved, and of those who were to perish, a change came over the heart and understanding of Dionysius, and repentance was already begun. He sought and found the Saviour. New thoughts and new feelings possessed him. The heathen rites, with which his office of Areopagite was necessarily connected, were forthwith abandoned. He became an outcast from all those whom he had heretofore known, and loved, and honoured, "choosing rather," like Moses,

* The Areopagus was a famous senate-house built upon a hill in Athens, wherein assembled their great court of justice, the most sacred and venerable tribunal in all Greece. Under their cognizance came all greater and more capital causes; and especially matters of religion, blasphemy against the gods, and contempt of the holy mysteries. (See Cave's Lives of the Fathers, vol. i., p. 134; Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities; Thirlwall's History of Greece, vol. i., p. 345, &c.)

"to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." (Heb. xi. 25, 26.)

His fidelity and diligence as a Christian are fully proved by his having been chosen first Bishop of Athens; and that he executed this difficult charge to the satisfaction of the church, appears from the fact that Paul addressed no epistle to that community. Its peace was uninterrupted, and its purity unsullied. Much of the subsequent life of Dionysius is involved in fable. He has been named as taking a principal share in the conversion of the Gauls. The scene of his preaching is not confined to the Romanized provinces of Narbonne and Aquitaine; but he is stated to have penetrated even as far as Paris: whatever may be the truth of his history, many French writers have believed their patron saint to be the Athenian who was converted by Paul; others, however, have advanced good reasons for believing, that Dionysius, the first Bishop of Paris, did not visit that country till the reign of Decius. Aristides, an Athenian philosopher, asserts, that he suffered martyrdom; a fact generally admitted by historians, but the precise period of his death they do not determine. Others say, that, having settled his affairs at Athens, and substituted a successor in his see, he went to Rome, whence he was despatched by Clemens into France, where he planted the faith, and founded an episcopal see at Paris; after some time, about the ninetieth year of his age, he returned into the East to converse with the Apostle John at Ephesus, and from thence he returned to Paris, where he is said to have suffered martyrdom.* As Paul reaped in Sergius Paulus the first-fruits of the harvest of rulers and governors which was to be brought into the garner of the church, so he did in Dionysius of the men of education. Born and nursed up in a religion and manners most adverse to the spirit of Christianity, he accepted conviction, and cheerfully followed the consequences, whithersoever they might lead him. What an example is he to the educated classes of the church!

Under the reign of Domitian the blood of TIMOTHY is also supposed to have been shed. He was a person in whom the Jew, the Gentile, and the Christian met. His father was a Greek, by religion a Gentile, or, if he professed Judaism, he was "a proselyte of the gate:" his mother, Eunice, was daughter to the devout and pious Lois, who, together with her daughter, was among the first who were

* "Among infinite other miracles reported of him, he is said to have taken up his head, after it had been cut off by the executioners, and to have carried it in his hands, (an angel going before, and a heavenly chorus attending him all the way,) for two miles together, till he came to the place of his interment, where he gently laid it and himself down, and was there honourably buried." (Dr. Cave's Lives of the Fathers.) "Aristides quoted by Usuard, and Sophronius of Jerusalem, styled him a martyr. The Greeks in their Menologies tell us, that he was burnt alive for the faith at Athens. His name occurs in ancient calendars on the 3d of October. The cathedral at Soissons is in possession of his head, (!) which was brought thither from Constantinople in 1205. Pope Innocent III. sent to the abbey of St. Denis near Paris, the body of this saint, which had been translated from Greece to Rome." (Alban Butler.)

converted to the Christian faith. It was on his second round of visitation and preaching in Asia, that Paul came to Derbe, a city of Lycaonia, where he found the young disciple, named Timothy, whose high character had received the testimony of the churches of Iconium and Lystra. On his second visit, he selected Timothy to be his assistant, and the companion of his travels. He assisted Paul in the foundation of the churches of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Corinth. At the first two places he had a proof of the trials which awaited the Preachers of Christ crucified, more especially at the hands of the Jews, to whom the doctrine was much more generally a stumbling-block than it was foolishness to the Greeks; but the persecution does not appear to have descended lower than the two principals, Paul and Silas. At Berea they found acceptable hearers and peace, until the Jews of Thessalonica came to disturb them there also. This produced a short separation of the party. It was necessary to the safety of Paul that he should quit the place. The brethren conducted him to Athens, while Timothy remained with Silas behind. How he was employed during this interval appears from Paul's two letters to the Thessalonians, the first of which he wrote from Corinth after Timothy had rejoined him. From this we find that Paul, on leaving Berea, had charged him to go to Thessalonica, and confirm the brethren there. This was a charge both of difficulty and danger: the persecution set on foot by the Jews, at the very first preaching of the Gospel, continued to rage there, insomuch that Paul, upon the hearing of it, began to fear lest they should be overcome by the trial, and all his labour prove vain. How must the neophyte have won the confidence of the keen-sighted, the watchful, the spiritual Paul, that, being so young, he should be selected for such a high office as instructing, comforting, and supporting an infant church, as yet staggering in weakness of members, and subjected to persecution!* The Apostle of the Gentiles and Timothy were constantly together, until the latter, endued with extraordinary powers, was sent to govern the church at Ephesus.

It was during his residence and supposed episcopate at Ephesus, that Timothy received his two epistles from Paul. In the first he gives various directions on public prayer, instructions on the ordination of Ministers of the word, cautions against heretics, with much advice on several points of his commission, concluding with a most solemn charge before God and Jesus Christ, that he should keep the commandment without spot, and unblamable. Timothy shortly received his second and last epistle from the same Apostle. It was penned with all the solemnity of one who was on the point of departure, and with all the prophetic spirit of a dying saint. He gave affecting hints of his approaching martyrdom. He stated that the company of zealous persons who had all along adhered to him in his adversity, had been sadly scattered; some having voluntarily forsaken him, and others having been sent by himself on an apostolical errand. "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto

* Evans's Scripture Biography, p. 268.

Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus." (2 Tim. iv. 9—12.) The whole epistle is exquisitely pathetic, and must have moved the affectionate spirit of Timothy. Whether he arrived in Rome in time to see Paul alive, does not appear. The Ephesians were a people of great laxity of morals and impiety: their manners were licentious and effeminate, profane and prodigal: it is said that they banished Hermodorus,* because he was more sober and thrifty than the rest of the inhabitants, and actually passed a decree to the effect, "Let none of ours be thrifty." They were strangely intoxicated with the study of magic, and the arts of sorcery and divination; the whole country was overrun with idolatry; the temple and the worship of Diana were notorious throughout the world. Among the numerous idolatrous festivals which amused, and at the same time degraded, the city of Ephesus, was one which they termed Καταγωγιον, and celebrated after the following manner:—Clothing themselves in some fantastic dress, and hiding the face in a mask that the person might not be recognised, with clubs in the hands, they carried idols, in a wild and frantic manner, through the most conspicuous parts of the city, singing songs and verses prepared for the occasion; and then, as if they possessed a licence to commit every kind of injury with impunity, they attacked all that came in their way, without respect to age or sex, and beat out their brains, viewing such atrocities as an honour rendered to their deities. This sanguinary and execrable custom gave serious cause of offence to all good and pious men. The spirit of Timothy was "stirred in him," to see the Most High so dishonoured, and humanity so prostrate and in the dust, at the instigation of the murderer of souls. Frequently did he endeavour to bring the people to a better mind by mild entreaty and persuasion; but all was of no avail. He, therefore, on the festival in question, boldly appeared amongst the idolaters, and reproved them with sharpness and severity. Impatient of control, and too headstrong quietly to submit to opposition, they fell upon the holy man with their clubs, and left him on the ground for dead. Some of the terrified Christians, perceiving him to breathe, took him up and lodged him without the gate: he expired on the third day.† Mr. Milner says, "If any credit is to be attached to this story, it is in the highest degree probable, that Timothy was the presiding Minister through whom the church is addressed. On the other hand it is argued, that

* "An Ephesian, and friend of the sage Heraclitus, whom his fellow-citizens had banished, because he filled them with shame, and they desired to be all on an equal footing in profligacy of conduct." (Lempriere.) "Qui Hermodorum virum inter eos frugi ejecerunt, dicentes, Nemo nostrum frugi esto, alioqui cum aliis ejiciatur." (Strabo, Geog., lib. xiv., p. 611. Fol. Basil., 1549.)

† In the Apocalyptic vision, which is supposed to have been written at the conclusion of the first century, the Angel of Ephesus is reproved, because he had fallen from his "first love;" and is exhorted to "repent, and do the first works." Calmet says, this Angel, or Bishop, was none other than Timothy. Many learned men agree with him in this opinion; and that he had fallen into some remissness of duty, in not reprehending the vices of those around him with sufficient rigour. If so, this fault was abundantly repaired, so as to give occasion for his martyrdom.

the relation is very uncertain; and that it is not likely that one so highly commended by Paul, in his Epistles, should receive so severe a censure as that dictated in the Apocalypse. (Rev. ii. 4, 5.) But this last objection is at once removed by the consideration, that the Angels or Presidents are not addressed personally; and that their particular state is not described, but the communities committed to their care. Upon the whole, we must leave the opinion adverted to involved in uncertainty, though the weight of evidence undoubtedly inclines in its favour." *

Mention has also been made of NICOMEDES, who was converted to the faith through the instrumentality of the Apostles. During the persecution which raged under Domitian, he rendered good service to the Christian church by fearlessly attending the martyrs in their imprisonment, encouraging and supporting them when called to suffer, and afterwards in securing to their mangled remains a decent interment, notwithstanding the malice and bigotry of the persecutors, who endeavoured, by disfiguring the lifeless forms of the sufferers, to prevent them from being recognised, that they might be confounded with the worst malefactors. While prosecuting these "labours of love," Nicomedes was apprehended, and beaten with rods until he expired under the hands of the executioners.

The career of Domitian was soon to close. The commencement of his reign promised tranquillity to the people; but their expectations were soon "cut off." He became cruel, and gave way to incestuous and unnatural indulgences. The last part of his reign is represented by Tacitus as most miserable and insupportable, in which Domitian endeavoured to ruin the state, and, by successive schemes of villany and oppression, to entail wretchedness upon the people. Rome had learned the fatal secret how to rid herself of monsters and tyrants in the shape of men. Nothing tended so much to expedite the fate of the Emperor, as the unjust death of Flavius Clemens, and the subsequent banishment of Domitilla. But the circumstance which brought the sanguinary affair to a crisis, was the discovery, by his own wife Domitia, who, prying into his table-book, to her inexplicable dismay, found her own name among the number doomed to be slain, together with some of his principal friends, particularly Stephanus the steward, Norbanus, and Patronius, to whom she showed the document, and with whom she forthwith concerted measures to effect the prompt destruction of the tyrant. The conspiracy was formed with secrecy and despatch; and nothing was wanting but an opportunity to put the fatal project into execution.

For some time Domitian had become very suspicious, and his anxieties were increased by the predictions of astrologers, but still more poignantly by the stings of remorse. He was so distrustful when alone, that round the terrace where he usually walked, he erected a wall, inlaid with bright stones which reflected the figure of any person who might be on the parade, that he might discern who was following him. All these precautions proved unavailing.

* Milner's History of the Seven Churches of Asia, p. 151. 8vo. London, 1832.

Roman writers speak of many omens which preceded his death, particularly numerous and vivid flashes of lightning, which terrified the Emperor to such a degree, as caused him to exclaim, "Let Jove strike whom he pleases." It is said that some astrologer gave him notice of the day and hour of his death; and that, on the preceding one, he directed some fruit, which he had ordered, to be reserved, emphatically adding, "If it be my fortune to partake of it." At midnight he was so affrighted as to leap out of his bed; and when the morning dawned, he sent for a soothsayer, who came out of Germany, and condemned him to instant execution for declaring that the late awful lightning portended some fearful revolution in the state. During the evening of this fatal day, his fears were great. On inquiring of his attendants the hour, they falsely gave him to understand that it was midnight, an hour later than the real time. Domitian at this was overjoyed; and, thinking he had passed the *Rubicon*, and that the dreaded day had expired without harm, immediately hastened to the bath. His chief Chamberlain with considerable earnestness led him another way, pretending that he had a person in his chamber who had business of the greatest importance to lay before him, which could not with safety be deferred. There he was met by Stephanus, who, feigning to disclose a conspiracy, placed in the hands of the Emperor a list of persons represented as being concerned in the plot: while he was reading with astonishment and horror the deep-laid scheme, Stephanus inflicted a deadly wound. Domitian crying out, closed upon the assassin, and with great violence threw him on the ground: in the midst of this struggle, Parthenius, Clodianus, Maximus, Saturius, with other conspirators, ran furiously upon and despatched the tyrant. The judgment of Heaven was even more exemplary in the indignity which was offered to his person and memory after death. His body was left in the open air, without the honours of a funeral. The joy of the Senate was so great on account of his decease, that, having assembled in haste, they reviled his character in terms the most opprobrious and contemptible; and even ordered ladders to be brought forthwith to remove every statue and image of the Emperor, which were destroyed in their presence; and, finally, they enacted a decree, "That no more honour should be shown at his funeral than was allowed to a common ruffian; that all his inscriptions should be totally erased; that his name should be struck out of the registers of fame, and his memory abolished for ever; that his acts should be rescinded, and all his exiles recalled." *

Domitian was succeeded by Nerva, who, as soon as the ceremonies connected with his installation were closed, diligently applied himself to the affairs of the public, and carried into prompt and vigorous execution the decree of the Senate which rescinded the acts of his predecessor. The banished followers of Christ were recalled, and

* See a Relation of the Death of the primitive Persecutors. Written originally in Latin by L. C. F. Lactantius, englished by Gilbert Burnet, D.D. To which he hath made a large Preface concerning Persecution. 12mo. Amsterdam. Printed for J. S., 1687. "Liber De Mortibus Persecutorum, ad Donatum Confessorem, Lucii Cæcilii Firmiani Lactantii." Suetonius in Domitianum.

permitted the full exercise of their religion ; * and although we know little or nothing of the affairs of the Christians within his short reign, we may hope that, under the protection of the above law, they escaped persecution, and their numbers continued to increase. We have no reason to conclude that personally Nerva felt any inclination to Christianity ; but he probably saw the injustice of punishing men for their opinions, and, having himself been banished by Domitian before he was taken into favour, he perhaps felt less inclined to listen to the advice of those who would have urged him to imitate the tyrant. His conduct would naturally lead to the spreading of the Gospel in the capital. Persons of rank, such as the widow of Flavius Clemens, would now have no fear of professing their opinions ; and among the evils of the late persecution there would be sure to be this benefit, that it purified the faith of those who still had courage to maintain their sentiments.† The Emperor had neither physical nor mental energy for his place : harassed by constantly-recurring anxieties, he was seized with fever, which put an end to his reign and life, after having wielded the sceptre one year, four months, and nine days. Nerva was succeeded by Trajan, who is supposed to have pursued the mild policy of his immediate predecessor, until the close of the first century.

* "The accession of Nerva changed the aspect of affairs. Pardon was extended to the Christians who had been condemned under the former reign ; the banished were recalled, the impost upon the Jews was remitted, and accusations on account of impiety and Judaism were prohibited. A law also was passed, forbidding slaves to bear testimony against their masters, the operation of which could not but be favourable to the Christians." (Welsh's Elements.)

† Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist. of the First Century, p. 378.

BOOK IV.

PERSECUTIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE FROM THE CLOSE OF THE FIRST TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER I.

State of the Church—Political Aspect of Affairs—General Character of the Emperors—Trajan—His History—Placidus—Apparent conciliatory Character of the Emperor—His persecuting Spirit—Hatred to the Christians—His Edict against Informers—Delatores—Deification of Nerva—Christians molested—Clement—His History—His Difficulties in Rome—Simon Magus—Domitian—Afflictive Condition of the Church at Rome—Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians—Perilous Condition of the Christians—Traditionary Accounts of Clement's Death—Evaristus—Alexander—Holy Water—Christians harassed in the East—Symeon—Bishop of Jerusalem—His Origin—Persecuting Spirit of the Jews—Awful Condition of that People—Destruction of Jerusalem—Refuge of the Church—Return to the holy City—Trajan's Suspicions—Symeon is arrested and martyred—Pliny the Younger—Circumstances in which he was placed—His Letter to Trajan—Reply of Trajan to Pliny—Uncertain State in which the Church was left—Tumultuous Proceedings against the Christians—Artful and wicked Schemes of the pagan Priesthood—Character of Pliny—Gibbon and Mosheim—Tertullian on the Edict of Trajan—Persecution general—Dacian War—Parthia—Trajan visits Antioch—State of the Antiochian Christians—Ignatius—Priority of the Church at Antioch—Heresies—Ignatius is brought before Trajan—The Interview—Sentence pronounced—Rev. John Gambold—Why Ignatius was sent to Rome—Fondness of the Romans for Shows—Journey of Ignatius to Rome—Is visited by the Asiatic Church—Writes to the Roman Christians—And other Churches—Character of the Epistles of Ignatius—He arrives at Rome—His Interview with the Church—Is led to the Amphitheatre—Where he suffers—Sanguinary Nature of the public Spectacles—Remains of Ignatius—His Character—Phocas—Sulpitius—Servilianus—Onesimus and other Martyrs—Remarks on the ten thousand Martyrs of Armenia—Insurrection of the Jews—The Cause of it—Horrid Atrocities committed—Suppression of the Insurrection—Death of Trajan—Character of his Reign.

When Trajan found himself fairly seated on the imperial throne, the Christian faith had struck its roots deep in the hearts of the better part of the inhabitants of the empire, and the grain of mustard-seed was sending forth branches that were beginning to overshadow the world. From the Tiber to the Euphrates, from mount Hæmus to lake Mœris, in all the most famous cities of the world, in towns and scattered villages also, and among the population of rural districts, converts to the new system were to be found, and in many places there were flourishing communities.* The astonishing success

* "It has been too much taken for granted," says Dr. Welsh, "by church-historians, that the Gospel was uniformly, in the first instance, preached in cities, and that from them it was derived and distributed among the surrounding towns and villages and

of the Christian cause can only be accounted for by the faithfulness of the great Head of the church in fulfilling the promise he had made to his Apostles, and by the fidelity and zeal with which they discharged the trust committed to them. The purity of their lives afforded evidence of their sincerity; they referred to what they had personally witnessed; their words, accompanied by a divine energy, were confirmed by the miraculous works which were performed. The zeal which animated the Apostles was communicated to the minds of other holy men, who proceeded in the same course as their divine teachers, delivering the truths which they had received from them, and carrying along with them the writings which they had left behind them, and which proved one of the most important means for confirming the brethren, and for diffusing to others the knowledge of the truth. The churches established by the Apostles were placed upon a basis that was favourable to their continuance; the converts in every city being formed into a community, and placed under the government of a senate of their own choosing, who might manage the affairs of the body. The different societies were all connected together by common interests and common dangers, and, above all, by love to one Lord, and hope in one inheritance. They were thus mutually encouraged, directed, and established. They had all an obvious interest in adding to their numbers, as they were prompted by the Spirit they had received to communicate to others the blessings they enjoyed; those who were without the Gospel were considered worthy of compassion; the monstrous and soul-destroying superstitions which prevailed around them kindled their zeal; and preparation was thus made for effectually extending, to surrounding districts, and other lands, "the Gospel of our salvation." *

It will be observed that the second century of Christianity witnessed the commencement of the reign of another race of Emperors. Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines were men of larger minds, more capable of holding the sceptre over a vast empire, and of regarding the interests, manners, and opinions of the multitude who formed the Roman people. Unlike the first Cæsars, who were, in fact, the Monarchs of Rome, governing other parts of the world as dependent provinces, they were the Sovereigns of the western world, which had gradually and almost imperceptibly arisen into one majestic and harmonious system. Under the military sway of Trajan the empire assumed strength, and its defences were so solid and durable as to impress all her adversaries with the highest notion of the Roman arms, and the Roman discipline. Hadrian directed his attention to

hamlets." This, no doubt, was frequently the case; and ultimately the Bishops and churches in large towns were careful to send out Presbyters throughout the adjacent country to make converts. (See Mosheim's Commentaries, vol. i., p. 234.) But from the very beginning the Gospel was preached in the country. Our Saviour himself gave the example. (Matt. ix. 35; Mark vi. 34; Luke xiii. 22.) He taught his Apostles to follow his steps; (Matt. x. 11;) and we find that they were carefully observed. (Acts xiv. 6; xviii. 23; xxvi. 20.) The accounts of the nature of the labours of Paul in Asia Minor, (Acts xviii. 23,) prepare us for the statement in the celebrated letter of Pliny, that "the contagion of the superstition had not seized cities only, but the lesser towns also, and the open country."

* Welsh's Elements of Church History, vol. i., p. 247.

the internal affairs of the state; and by the general spirit of jurisprudence which pervaded all the acts of the Antonines, they united under one general system of law the various members of a great political confederacy. It was therefore next to impossible, that, to minds so occupied with the internal as well as external affairs of the whole empire, the progress of a new religion should escape their notice. "Christianity itself," to use the language of an able writer, "was just in that state of advancement in which, though it had begun to threaten, and even to make most alarming encroachments on the established polytheism, it had not so completely divided the whole race of mankind, as to force the heads of the polytheistic party, the official conservators of the existing order of things, to take violent and decisive measures for its suppression. The temples, though perhaps becoming less crowded, were in few places deserted; the alarm, though perhaps in many towns it was deeply brooding in the minds of the priesthood, and of those connected by zeal or by interest with the maintenance of Paganism, was not so profound, or so general, as imperiously to require the interposition of the civil authorities. The milder or more indifferent character of the Emperor had free scope to mitigate or to arrest the arm of persecution. The danger was not so pressing, but that it might be averted; that which had arisen thus suddenly and unexpectedly (so little were the wisest probably aware of the real nature of the revolution working in the minds of men) might die away with as much rapidity. Under an Emperor, indeed, who should have united the vigour of a Trajan, and the political forethought of a Hadrian, with the sanguinary relentlessness of a Nero, Christianity would have had to pass a tremendous ordeal. Now, however, the collision of the new religion with the civil power was only occasional, and, as it were, fortuitous; and in these occasional conflicts with the ruling powers, we constantly appear to trace the character of the reigning Sovereign. Of these Emperors, Trajan possessed the most powerful and vigorous mind,—a consummate General, a humane, but active, ruler; Hadrian was the profoundest statesman; the Antonines the best men. The conduct of Trajan was that of a military Sovereign, whose natural disposition was tempered with humanity, prompt, decisive, never unnecessarily prodigal of blood; but careless of human life if it appeared to stand in the way of any important design, or to hazard that paramount object of the government, the public peace. Hadrian was inclined to a more temporizing policy: the more the Roman empire was contemplated as a whole, the more the co-existence of multifarious religions might appear compatible with the general tranquillity. Christianity might, in the end, be no more dangerous than the other foreign religions, which had flowed, and were still flowing, in from the East. The temples of Isis had arisen throughout the empire; but those of Jupiter and Apollo had not lost their votaries: the eastern mysteries, the Phrygian, at a later period the Mithraic, had mingled very little to their prejudice into the general mass of the prevailing superstitions. The last characteristic of Christianity which would be distinctly understood, was its invasive and uncom-

promising spirit. The elder Antonine may have pursued from mildness of character the course adopted by Hadrian from policy. The change which took place during the reign of Marcus Aurelius may be attributed to the circumstances of the time; though the pride of philosophy, as well as the established religion, might begin to take the alarm." *

Trajan was by birth a Spaniard, whose life had hitherto been spent in various military services in different parts of the world. We know but little concerning his early years, and nothing that could have brought him into contact with the Christians. His father served under Vespasian and Titus in the Jewish war, and held the rank of Tribune during part of those campaigns; † but the son, who was only sixteen years old at the time of the taking of Jerusalem, was not likely to have interested himself in questions of religion, even if his father had related to him any facts of Jewish or Christian superstition. Baronius ‡ supposes that another officer, who served in the Jewish war, and who afterwards suffered martyrdom as a Christian, was personally known to Trajan. This was Placidus, who commanded under the Emperor, and gained much distinction in the first Dacian campaign, in the year 101; but whether he was the same person who was martyred in the first year of Hadrian, must be considered doubtful.§ Nerva probably adopted Trajan as his successor, because of some congeniality in the mind of the latter with his own. Nerva was not disposed to cruelty; and if Trajan followed the example of his predecessor in his political measures, he doubtless hesitated to encourage those around him who would have employed force against the Christians. In the interval between the death of Nerva and the arrival of Trajan at Rome, the Emperor wrote to the Senate, and among other declarations, he promised that no command of his should inflict death or disgrace upon any person of good character. With the Christians this manifesto would not fail to be considered as a miserable subterfuge, inasmuch as they were ever viewed by the Heathen as most impious. The historian, Dion Cassius, it is true, says, that Trajan kept this promise inviolate through the whole of his reign; but every one acquainted with ancient history is aware, that a pledge of this kind would by no means have restrained a Roman Magistrate from punishing a Christian; and the expression which has been so much extolled by the historian, as having proceeded from Trajan, and as being indicative of his benevolence and justice, may doubtless be traced to the sentence which is recorded by Dion Cassius: ‖ "Juravit in senatu, nullum e senatoribus suo jussu interfectum iri;" implying that no Senator should be put to death. Notwithstanding these declarations of "good-will toward men," the Christians suffered severely under the reign of this mild and pacific Prince: we therefore inquire into the cause. Among the numerous

* Milman's History of Christianity, vol. ii., pp. 138, 139.
† Joseph. De Bello Jud., lib. iii., cap. vii., sect. xxxi., cap. ix., sect. 8.
‡ Baronius, ad An. 103, sect. iv.
§ Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xiii., p. 11.
‖ Dionis. Cassii Coccei Nervæ Historia, lib. lxviii., p. 770. Fol. Hanov., 1606.

letters which Trajan addressed to the Senate, none was more likely to lead to direct attacks upon the professors of Christianity, than one in which he expressed himself strongly attached to the national religion, as handed down from their ancestors ; and a person in office, who acted upon this principle, might have felt it a duty to persecute Christianity, although not naturally inclined to be cruel. We have no account of any persecution of the Christians having taken place in the absence of Trajan during the first year of his reign. Baronius adverts to a persecution which some writers have mentioned, in which Flavia Domitilla, and the other exiles who had been recalled by the edict of Nerva, are said to have suffered martyrdom. The evidence which has been adduced in support of this assertion is utterly destitute of foundation.

In addition to the above, it must be observed, that soon after Trajan visited the metropolis, a severe law was enacted against persons who were convicted of bringing an unjust accusation. The trade of an informer, (*delatoris,**) or spy, had frequently received marks of public disapprobation and infamy ; and it would appear from the present statute, that the odious offence had been perpetrated with frequency. It is not probable that the Emperor or his advisers intended by this measure to protect the Christians : it had, nevertheless, in some degree, that effect, and the enemies of the faith were induced to indulge but seldom in that vexatious system of persecution. Among other acts of Trajan, upon his taking possession of the empire, we find him giving to his predecessor Nerva, a place in the list of deities ; but the policy was so obvious, and the custom so regularly established, that we cannot charge it upon the Emperor as a special act of superstition ; nor can we say whether he would be more likely to persecute the Christians, because he paid this attention to the established religion of his country. It is possible, that the introduction of a new deity may have exposed the Christians to some molestation, since their refusal to sacrifice in the name of the Emperor was a common ground of complaint against them, and one which was likely to be put forward at the commencement of a new reign. We

* The *delatores*, under the Emperors, were a class of men who gained their livelihood by informing against their fellow-citizens. (See Suetonius in Tib., sect. 61 ; in Domit., sect. 12 ; Taciti Annales, lib. iv., cap. xxx. ; lib. vi., cap. 47.) They constantly brought forward false charges to gratify the avarice or jealousy of the different Emperors, and were consequently paid according to the importance of the information which they gave. In some cases, however, the law specified the sums which were to be given to informers. Thus, when a murder had been committed in a family, and any of the slaves belonging to it had run away before the *quæstio*, whoever apprehended such slaves received for each a reward of five *aurei* from the property of the deceased. In the Senatus-consultum, quoted by Frontinus, the informer received half of the penalty in which the person was fined who transgressed the decree of the Senate. There seems also to have been a fixed sum given to informers, by the *lex Papia*, since we are told that Nero reduced it to a fourth. (Suet. in Neron., sect. 10.) The number of informers, however, increased so rapidly under the early Emperors, and occasioned so much mischief in society, that many of them were banished and punished in other ways by Titus, Domitian, and Trajan. (Suet. in Tit., sect. 8 ; in Domit., sect. 9 ; Plin. Panegyr. 34 ; Brissonius, Ant. Select., lib. iii., cap. 17.) Trajan "utterly exterminated those insufferable vermin, the *delators*, informers, and pettifoggers, who, in former reigns, had made incredible advantages by fomenting all kinds of private quarrels and dissensions." (Echard's Rom. Hist., vol. ii., p. 270. 8vo. London, 1719.)

are told also, that earthquakes, famines, and pestilences were felt at this period in several parts of the world; and this furnished another topic of invective against the Christians, who were supposed to call down the anger of heaven by their apostacy from the national faith. It appears, therefore, that there were circumstances in the first two years of Trajan's reign, which were likely to excite opposition to the Gospel.*

Among those who were called to experience reproach and suffering for the sake of Christ during the reign of Trajan, Clement has been named. He was a fellow-worker with Paul in the Gospel of Christ; and the church at Philippi, among others, was the scene of those services which were ultimately to be transferred with benefit to the church at Rome. But the veil which obscures the history of the early church, and particularly shrouds that of the origin of the Christian community in Rome, hides from our observation all the facts which pertain to Clement, from his sojourn at Philippi, to his residence in the imperial city. About three-and-twenty years had elapsed since Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom, and two Bishops, Linus and Anacletus, had successively discharged the pastoral office, when Clement was summoned to the episcopate. As a companion of the Apostles, he would be held in reverence, and his authority would be appealed to, as of one whose information was drawn from the fountain head,† "having their preaching still sounding in his ears, and their traditions before his eyes."‡ But not being an Apostle, he had to contend with numerous difficulties, from unreasonable and mischievous men, who reluctantly submitted to his authority. We may gather some idea of the opposition with which he had to contend, from the earnestness with which Paul urges Timothy and Titus, and from the character which he draws of the persons who were likely to dispute their apostolical call and influence. (1 Tim. iv. 12, 13; 2 Tim. iii. 2; Titus ii. 7, 8.) If Simon Magus had withstood Peter at Rome, there would not be wanting some of his heretical progeny to contend with Clement on the same ground. Notwithstanding, however, the difficulties which presented themselves, the prospects of Clement were bright and cheering, inasmuch as he beheld the church rising from every fresh assault with increased vigour and strength. The severity of the times frequently called upon him to be ready to lay down his life for his flock. Domitian vexed the church. The Jews, unsubdued by the fall of the temple, and their subsequent dispersion, were still in continual expectation of the coming of their Christ, whose name they vociferated in the midst of seditious uproar and tumult. The reigning tyrant became alarmed, and the Christian was involved in the crimes of the Jew. The church in Rome received the first and heaviest strokes of Domi-

* Burton's Lect. on the Eccles. Hist., &c., lect. xiii., p. 13.

† See the frequent reference which Irenæus makes to the testimony of men who were in the same succession with Clement. The passages are brought together in Dr. Routh's Reliquiæ Sacræ, vol. i.

‡ "Qui et vidit Apostolos, et contulit cum eis, et cum adhuc insonantem prædicationem Apostolorum, et traditionem ante oculos haberet." (Irenæus, Adv. Heres., lib. iii, cap. 3.)

tian's scourge. The false and horrible charges, which had been propagated against the Christians in gone-by days, were repeated, and the imputation of membership at once subjected the accused to the dungeon. Here was enough to try the piety, fortitude, and zeal of one who possessed more calculating policy and temporizing sagacity than Clement could claim; but he was indefatigable in confirming the wavering, cheering the desponding, preparing the martyr for his suffering, administering comfort to the bereaved, combating the expostulations of those who wished to drop some badge of their profession, the importance of which they thought light compared with the danger to which it exposed them, or to adopt the screen of some observance which they were unwilling to consider sinful under such pressing necessity; calming the terrors of the weaker brethren, and, amid this distraction of the crew, directing, like a good helmsman, a steady look-out upon the course of the labouring vessel:* these were the cares of Clement, and he weathered the storm.†

Though the accession of Nerva extinguished the flames of the persecution which raged so fiercely during a portion of Domitian's days, the fire remained, concealed, it is true, but smouldering in the ashes, waiting only for fuel and a breeze, to break forth in its former intensity and vigour. The situation of the Christian was at all times perilous. He was surrounded by idolatry, the usages of which met and thwarted him in almost every occurrence of daily life, exposing him to the scoff and ill-treatment of those around. His principles were recognised when he refused to join a party of friends in the amusements of the circus, when he declined the office of the Magistracy, when he omitted to set up lights and laurel at his door in honour of Cæsar, when, in executing a contract, he was required to swear, or was understood to swear, by the name of some heathen god; when, if a carpenter, he refused an application to make an image, or some appendage to heathen worship; if, when a smith, he was called to gild a statue; if, when a druggist, he refused to sell frankincense for sacrifice; if, when a schoolmaster, he appointed no holidays for the festival of Saturn. The Christian, in a word, walked on volcanic ground: every day furnished fresh scenes of vexation and persecu-

* It was during the episcopate of Clement in Rome, that a grievous schism arose in the church at Corinth, in which some turbulent persons attacked the Clergy, and excited the laity against them. This was the occasion of great evil: many professing Christianity began to entertain doubts with regard to its truth; while infidels failed not to take advantage of this state of things, and to asperse the whole church for the faults of a few. Clement was induced to write an epistle to that community; which production of the early church approaches so near the apostolic writings, in the union of devout feeling with justness and sobriety of thought, that it was frequently read in the churches, though never received into the sacred canon. Eusebius terms it a "great and wonderful" writing; and Irenæus designates it as "most powerful." The main object of the epistle was to allay the dissensions which had arisen in the Corinthian Church, and especially to repress the unruly spirit shown by many against their Teachers. He then recommends charity, lauding it in terms similar to those of Paul; and having stirred them up with examples of faithful devotion among the Gentiles, concludes with renewed exhortations to subordination, winding up with a solemn prayer to God, the all-seeing Ruler, the Master of spirits, and Lord of all. The spirit of this letter is remarkably mild and unassuming, and the style unpretending.

† Evans's Biography of the Early Church, p. 21.

tion.* It was in one of these outbreaks, that tradition says, Clement suffered.† It is stated that he was sent into banishment by Trajan beyond the Euxine, with two thousand Christians, when he opened a spring of water to those in the wilderness, who were condemned to the mines. Afterwards, being accused to the Emperor, he was thrown into the sea with a millstone fastened about his neck; and not long after his body was cast up, and buried at the place where the well was miraculously made. This account is rejected by Foxe.‡ The fact is, we are destitute of all authentic records of a persecution so early in Trajan's reign as this; and the story of the banishment and subsequent martyrdom of Clement, is by no means credibly supported. Before the treatment of the Christians had undergone any change in the councils of the Emperor, Clement had breathed his last.

Clement was succeeded by Evaristus, of whom nothing is recorded on the pages of history worthy of being remembered. In certain decretal epistles which are imposed upon the world as the production of the apostolical Fathers, are found two, which are said to have proceeded from the pen of Evaristus, and that he himself suffered martyrdom; but how he suffered, and with what constancy he died, and what was the general conduct of his earthly career, we are not told. Alexander was his successor, who is said to have converted many of the Senators of Rome to the faith of Christ; amongst whom was Hermes, a man of influence in the imperial city, whose son being

* This enumeration is taken from a list of grievances and stumbling-blocks given by Tertullian in his curious and interesting Treatise De Idololatriâ. (Evans's Biography.)

† Butler says, that Ruffinus and Pope Zosimus recognise Clement as a martyr. In the ancient Canon of the Romish mass, he is ranked also in that category: "But Telesphorus, the seventh Bishop of Rome, is the first who was acknowledged as such by Irenæus, whose authority is of far greater weight than that of Ruffinus or Pope Zosimus, who suppose him to have died for the confession of the faith. In the Acts of Clement, to which Gregory of Tours gives entire credit, and after him many others, especially the two credulous Annalists, Baronius and Alford, in his Annals of the British Church, we read, that Clement was banished by Trajan, into the Chersonesus, beyond the Euxine; that there he caused a fountain to spring up miraculously, for the relief of the Christians confined to the same inhospitable region; that he converted the whole country to the faith, which provoked the Emperor to such a degree, that he ordered him to be thrown into the sea, with an anchor fastened to his neck: it is added, that on the anniversary of his death, the sea retired to the place where he had been drowned, though three long miles from the shore; that upon its retiring, there appeared the most magnificent temple, all of the finest marble; and in the temple a stately monument, in which was found the body of the saint; that the sea continued thus retiring every year on the same day, not daring for the space of seven days to return to its usual bounds, that the Christians might, at their leisure, and without apprehensions of danger, perform their devotions in honour of the saint. To crown the whole, they add, that one year, a mother, having heedlessly left her young child in the temple, upon her return the following year, she found it not only alive, but in perfect health." (Bower's Lives of the Popes, vol. i., p. 17.)

‡ "Forasmuch as I find of his martyrdom no firm relation in the ancient authors, but only in such new writers of later times, which are wont to paint out the lives and histories of good men with feigned additions of forged miracles, therefore, I count the same of less credit: as I do also certain decretal epistles, untruly (as may seem) ascribed and entituled to his name. Eusebius, in his third book, writing of Clement, giveth no more of him, but this: 'In the third year of the above-mentioned reign, (Trajan,) Clement, Bishop of Rome, committed the episcopal charge to Evaristus, and departed this life, after superintending the preaching of the divine word nine years.'" (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. iii., cap. 34.) Foxe's Acts and Monuments, vol. i., p. 111. Seeley's edition. London, 1843.

dead was raised to life by Alexander.* This Prelate has the credit of being the first inventor of the holy water in universal use by the Church of Rome.† The Greek Church, also, has introduced it into their ceremonies. Water which has been consecrated by prayer, and other rites, is employed to sprinkle the faithful, and things which are used during divine service. It is placed in vases at the doors of churches and chapels, and also within the sacred edifices, from whence the congregation may asperse themselves.‡ Platina, in his "Lives of the Popes," following the authority of the celebrated Decretals of the Romish hierarchy, unhesitatingly attributes the invention of this Popish device to Alexander, much to the chagrin of Baronius, inasmuch as he thereby deprives the Apostles of an honour which the Annalist declares is due to them. The Roman Martyrologies invariably adorn Alexander with the martyr's wreath. Florilegus, the author of "Flores Historiarum," affirms, that Alexander, Bishop of Rome, was beheaded seven miles out of the city; but with this account none of the chronicles agree. That nothing of any moment attended the death of this man, is evident from the simple statement of Eusebius: "In the third year of Hadrian's reign, Alexander, Bishop of Rome, died, having completed the tenth year of his ministrations." §

There is reason to believe, that not many years of Trajan's reign had passed away, before a series of attacks was made upon the Chris-

* Foxe's Acts and Monuments, vol. i., p. 113.

† At least, such is the language of the Roman Decretals. But very little is recorded of the acts and monuments of Alexander, or any other Bishop of Rome, of this period. Notwithstanding, documents are thrust upon us, crowded with injunctions, laws, and pompous decrees, which are far more becoming the policy of the Papal Church in the present day, than the simplicity and godly sincerity which pervaded the Christian community during the times of the holy Apostles. Alexander is represented as giving publicity to the following decree:—"Aquam sale conspersam populis benedicimus, ut eâ cuncti aspersi sanctificentur, et purificentur. Quod et omnibus Sacerdotibus faciendum esse mandamus. Nam si cinis vitulæ sanguine aspersus," &c. (Corp. Juris Canon., tom. i. Decret. iii., Paris. De Consecrat., Dist. iii., cap. 20, p. 467. Colon., 1779.) "We bless the water mixed with salt, upon the people, that all men being sprinkled therewith may be sanctified and purified; and this we command all Priests to do. For if the ashes of an heifer sprinkled with blood sanctified and cleansed the people, how much more does water mingled with salt, and consecrated by divine prayer, sanctify and cleanse! And if the unfruitfulness of the water were healed by the salt thrown in by Eliseus the Prophet, how much more shall salt, rendered sacred by holy prayer, take away the unfruitfulness of other things, sanctify, and cleanse, and purge those which are polluted, multiply all good, turn away the snares of the devil, and defend men from the artifices of evil spirits!"

‡ "Holy-water is often found in the bed-rooms of the Papists, and is used before prayer, particularly before going into bed. The Romanists consider it an effectual exorcism. In Rome, animals are also sprinkled, on a certain feast, with holy water, to keep them healthy and thriving. The same thing is done at Moscow, where there is a particular church to which the horses are annually driven for this purpose. It does not appear that vessels were placed at the doors of churches for washing the hands till the fourth century, or that the water was blessed or consecrated till the sixth." (Henderson's Theol. Dict.) Popery, we have seen, disputes the latter opinion. "If we trace up this 'holy water' to the fountain-head, we shall find that it arises from an unhallowed spring, from the lustral water of the Pagans: peace being restored to the church by Constantine, the Christians began, as a modern writer well observes, to adopt the ceremonies of the Gentiles." (Bower's History of the Popes, vol. i., p. 22. Quarto. London, 1750. See also Le Sueur's Histoire de l'Eglise et de l'Empire, vol. i., p. 219. Quarto. Amsterdam, 1730.

§ Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. iv., cap. 4.

tians in the eastern part of the empire. The first Dacian campaign of the Emperor was not fully completed, until the country was subdued by the defeat and death of Decebalus. The martyrdom of Symeon, the second Bishop of Jerusalem, is generally supposed to have taken place in the year 104. Symeon was the son of Cleopas, who was brother of Joseph. Thus he was reputed cousin-german to the Lord. His mother was Mary, sister of the Virgin. He was in the vigour of ripe manhood when the long-expected Saviour revealed himself to the world in one of the members of his own family. In what position Symeon stood as a disciple of our Lord, is not known. He might have been one of the seventy, since we may reasonably suppose that his Master, who intended to place him hereafter in so conspicuous a situation in his church, would give him this earnest and foretaste of its duties, and mark him out to the church by this token of his approbation. Be that as it may, the Christian community in Jerusalem had to endure much suffering and peril. In one of the murderous riots with which the Jews assailed the flock of Christ, they threw its Bishop, James, the brother of the Lord, down from the battlements of the temple, and then stoned him until he expired.* Symeon was elected by the church in the place of James, who was frequently called upon to withstand fearful perversions of the truth, and the unholy falsehoods, and audacious forgeries of many, who, in this infant church, jeopardized the eternal salvation of the flock. In process of time, a succession of iniquitous and rapacious Governors goaded the Jews onward to their fatal rebellion. The attention of these great persecutors was too fully absorbed with their own concerns, to heed the condition of the church. The prophecy of Christ was rapidly unfolding itself. The portentous signs which he had bidden the Jews to expect, were already blazing in the sky. What must have been the feelings of Symeon, when the fiery sword hung in the atmosphere over his dying country for a whole year!† Now his vigilance was put to the severest proof. Symeon had to preach righteousness, and to win over, and save, as many as possible of the unconverted. But as it was in the days of Noah, so it was in these. The Jews were accustomed to horrors; and hence the small probability of their listening to the words of the heaven-taught teacher. They kicked against the pricks: all warnings, whether from a human or a divine source, were alike unavailing. They yielded to the suggestions of the evil one, until they rushed to the brink of the precipice, and plunged down headlong.

During this momentous period, the household of faith were calmly waiting the end. The first signal had already been given: Jerusalem was encompassed with armies. (Luke xxi. 20.) Christian hymn and prayer ascended amid the execration of the doomed. The temple, where murderers, and no longer righteousness, lodged, had, without doubt, ceased to be frequented by the flock of Christ. What an awful interval of suspense was this, when all the haunts of their devotion, all the monuments of the religion of their fathers, all the

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. ii., cap. 23.
† Joseph. De Bello Jud., lib. vi., cap. v., sect. 3.

spots consecrated by the Lord's presence, yea, their own places of assembly for prayer, were shortly to be mingled with blood, smoke, and fire, in one undistinguished ruin! At length the signal of the Lord came. Symeon and the church were warned to quit the devoted city, and take refuge in Pella, a city in the mountainous country beyond Jordan.* An interruption in the siege afforded them free passage, and there they heard of their country being wiped out from the tablet of nations, and of unnumbered myriads of their countrymen being slain or sold. We have no means of ascertaining the length of time in which the church sojourned at Pella: doubtless, it returned when the troubles of Judea were composed, and the axe and mattock had done their work in Jerusalem. At Pella, the Christians dwelt among the Heathen. Jerusalem, desolate as it was, would furnish them with some retreat.† Roman vengeance had not destroyed the Mount of Olives, nor Mount Calvary, nor the Mounts Zion and Moriah, however they might have rooted up the Garden of Gethsemane, and the streets through which the Redeemer had ridden in triumph to the temple. Symeon was instrumental in re-establishing the church on her ancient locality.‡

We know but little of the civil history of the Jews during this period. They had ceased to give any uneasiness to the Romans, and many who had escaped the siege and its consequences, were allowed once more to settle among the ruins of the city, or in the neighbouring towns. This indulgence may, in some degree, be attributed to Agrippa, whose good fortune did not leave him after the ruin of his country. The insignificance of the Jews as a people did not fail to advance the interests of the church at Jerusalem.§ Profound peace prevailed. But we are unacquainted how far the Emperor Domitian's cruelty affected the Christians at Jerusalem. The same jealousy which characterized him, concerning the persons descended from David, influenced Trajan, and was the cause of Symeon's martyrdom. As the population of Jerusalem increased, after being re-occupied, probably the jealousy and suspicions of the Roman government revived; and as the Jews were still eager in their expectations of a leader sent from heaven, they found it expedient to turn the attention of their conquerors to the Christians, who were constantly confounded with the Jews. It was also well, nay, universally, known, that the Christian would rather die, than renounce his belief in the Son of David; and the person who was acknowledged as the head of the Christian world was a descendant of David. Symeon was charged at the tribunal of Atticus, the Proconsul of Syria, both with being of the seed of David, and a Christian. In consequence of this, he was put to the torture for many days, and bore the long

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. iii., cap. 5.

† Epiphanius, De Mens. et Pond., cap. 14, says, that in Hadrian's time, the Christians had a church erected on the site of the upper chamber, to which the Apostles retired after the Lord's ascension. If so, we must understand Josephus's account of the erasing of the city, (Bell. Jud., lib. vii., cap. i., sect. 1,) with some trifling exception. (Evans's Biography.)

‡ Evans's Biography of the Early Church, p. 47.

§ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. iii., cap. 20, 32.

and sharp agony with such fortitude, as to excite the surprise of the Governor and the spectators, who wondered how an old man of a hundred and twenty years could endure it.* At length, he was condemned to be crucified. Mr. Evans has justly observed, that "with the death of Symeon, a thick veil descends upon the history of the church at Jerusalem for many successions."†

Christianity had spread with unequal success in numerous quarters; but in no country had it advanced with greater rapidity than in the northern provinces of Asia Minor, where the inhabitants were of very mingled descent, neither purely Greek, nor essentially Asiatic, with a considerable portion of Jewish colonists, chiefly of Babylonian or Syrian, not of Palestinian, origin. It was here, in the province of Bithynia, that polytheism first discovered the deadly enemy which was undermining her authority. It was here also that the first cry of distress was uttered, and complaints of deserted temples, and less frequent sacrifices, were brought before the tribunal of the government. The memorable correspondence between Pliny and Trajan, is the most valuable record of the early Christian history during this period. Paganism claimed the alliance of power to maintain its decaying influence. Christianity proceeded in its silent course, imperfectly understood by those who were around, of manifesting contumacious repugnance to the common usages of society.‡ This contumacy, according to the recognised principle of passive obedience to the laws of the empire, was viewed as deserving the severest punishment. Pliny had but recently been intrusted with the government of Bithynia and Pontus.§ He soon found himself at a loss to determine by what rule of justice or of law he should direct his conduct in the execution of an office the most repugnant to his humanity. No sooner had he entered upon his duties, than his attention was called to the spread of Christianity in those provinces. The temples were deserted, the rites of Paganism neglected, purchasers were no longer found for the sacrifices, and multitudes were brought before his tribunal charged with being Christians. Pliny had never assisted at any judicial proceedings, in his character of Advocate, against this people, and he was totally uninformed with regard to the nature of their guilt, the method of their conviction, and the degree of their punishment. Similar accusations had been made before this time to

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. iii., cap. 32.

† "I have placed," says Dr. Burton, "the death of Symeon in 104. Lloyd and Dodwell place it as late as 116; but the more usual date is 107, the only authority for which is the Chronicon of Eusebius. This work certainly seems to mention the death of Symeon in the tenth year of Trajan: but it is generally acknowledged, that Eusebius connects different events together, without intending to assert that they happened at the same time; and in the present instance he, perhaps, meant to speak of the death of Symeon as the first transaction of importance in the persecution which happened under Trajan. Pearson places the death of Symeon earlier than 107. (De Success., p. 9.) Ruinart and Baratier assign it to 104; and the latter (p. 73) quotes Dio as saying, that Palmas was Governor of Syria in 105, 106, and 107." (See Tillemont's Memoires.)

‡ The conjecture of Pagi, that the attention of the Government was directed to the Christians by their standing aloof from the festivals on the celebration of the Quindecenalia of Trajan, is extremely probable. (Milman.)

§ Milman's History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 140.

other provincial Governors, during the reign of Trajan, and multitudes of Christians had been put to death. Pliny was not of a temper to yield to the wishes of the multitude, in carrying into effect a barbarous policy, without full consideration. In this perplexity the Proconsul had recourse to his usual expedient of submitting to the Emperor an account of the new superstition, requesting him to solve his doubts, and instruct his ignorance. The following is the epistle :—

"It is an inviolable rule with me, Sir, to make reference of all those things, wherein I doubt, to you; for who is better able either to direct my judgment, or instruct my ignorance? I have never yet witnessed any of the proceedings against the Christians; and, therefore, I am quite at a loss what punishment ought to be administered, and to what extent; and how far it is proper that any inquiry should be made after them. Nor am I at all clear, whether any difference should be made for age, or whether those of tender years should be treated with the same severity as adults; also, whether repentance should entitle to a pardon, or whether he who has once been a Christian should gain nothing by ceasing to be one; also, whether the bare profession, unaccompanied by any criminal conduct, should be visited with punishment, or only crimes which may be connected with the profession. In the mean time, I have adopted this course with those who have been brought before me as Christians: I ask them whether they are Christians: if they confess to it, I repeat the question a second and a third time, accompanied with threats: if they persist, I order them to be led to punishment;* for of this I never doubted, that, whatever their opinions might be, a contumacious and inflexible obstinacy deserved correction. Some of those infected with this infatuation, being citizens of Rome, I have reserved as privileged persons to be sent thither. But the crime spreading (as is usually the case) while it was actually under prosecution, more cases soon occurred. An anonymous libel was presented to me, containing the names of many persons, who yet denied that they were, or ever had been, Christians, and repeated after me an invocation of the gods, and offered worship with wine and incense to your image, (which, for this purpose, I ordered to be brought with the images of the deities,) and they even cursed Christ; things which, I am told, no real Christian can be prevailed on to do: on this account, I thought proper to discharge them. Others, on being accused by an open informer, have allowed that they were Christians, but presently after denied it; alleging, that once indeed they were Christians, but that they ceased to be such, some three years ago, others more, some even twenty years back: these, likewise, all worshipped your image and the images of the gods, and even cursed Christ: but the whole account they gave of their crime or error (whichever it is to be called) amounted only to this, namely, that they were accustomed, on a stated day, to meet before day-light, and to repeat together a set form of prayer to Christ as God, and to bind themselves by an obligation, not, indeed, to commit wickedness, but, on the contrary, never to commit theft, robbery, or adultery, never to falsify their

* See Lardner's Works, vol. vii., p. 26, *et seq.* 8vo edit. London, 1831.

word, never to defraud any man: after which it was their custom to separate, and re-assemble to partake in common of a harmless meal, from which last practice, however, they had desisted, in consequence of my edict, in which (agreeably to your command) I forbad such societies. This being the whole of their statement, I judged it quite necessary to examine two young women, who were said to be Deaconnesses, by torture, in order to get at the real truth; but I found out nothing except absurd and raving superstition. I had thought proper, therefore, to suspend all further proceedings, in order to consult you. For it appears to me a matter which calls for serious deliberation, especially on account of the great number of the persons involved, many of all ranks and ages, and of both sexes, being already under prosecution, and more will soon be in the same situation. Not that I think it impossible to check and master the evil: this at least is certain, that the temples which were nearly deserted have begun to be frequented, and the sacred solemnities which had been intermitted are again attended; and victims, which lately were very scarce, owing to the scarcity of purchasers, are now selling everywhere. Whence it is easy to conjecture, that crowds might be reclaimed from their error, if only pardon should be promised to such as repent."

Trajan, in reply to the above, says,* "You have followed just the course which you ought, my dear Secundus, in dealing with the Christians who have been brought before you; for no specific rule can be framed so as to be of universal application. These people, however, must not be purposely sought after: if they be brought before you, and convicted, they must be punished; yet with this restriction, that if any declares that he is not a Christian, and shall prove that he is not by the fact of supplicating our gods, however suspected for the past, let him be pardoned on his repentance."

The result of this correspondence is obvious. Trajan fixed the law that the mere fact of being a Christian was a capital offence, but with these restrictions, that offenders were not to be sought out, that anonymous charges were not to be received against them, that it was only when an open accuser appeared that any case was to be proceeded in, and that even then pardon was to be extended to those who recanted. The state of the church was left in very great uncertainty, and the condition of the Christians would be different in different places, according to the character, and number, and relative position of Heathens and Christians. In some parts of the empire the church was undisturbed; in others, accusations were openly lodged against the professors of Christianity, and many were put to death. The edict of the Emperor, which required the formality of an accuser before the courts of law, threw the shield of protection over the injured party. The benevolent intention of which was, however, defeated by the enemies of righteousness, who incited the people to

* "Trajan writes like an honourable soldier, not like a philosopher or a lawgiver studying the good of mankind. His approbation of Pliny's general conduct was harsh and severe. His saying that Christians were not to be searched for, shows an opinion of their innocence, and also some fear of them: his adding that they were to be punished, if brought before him, was scarcely just. Tertullian is eloquent upon this inconsistency." (*Vide infra.*) (Hey's Lectures, vol. i., p. 202.)

avail themselves of their privilege at public assemblies of demanding of the Magistrates what they wished.* In a riotous and tumultuary manner they were induced to insist that punishment should be inflicted upon the Christians. It was seldom safe to refuse demands made in such circumstances, and the Magistrates generally yielded to the clamours of the multitude. Some, however, were sensible of the injustice thus perpetrated; and, in consequence of a remonstrance from Serenus Granius to the Emperor Hadrian, an explanatory imperial rescript was addressed to Minutius Fundatus, the successor of Serenus, by which tumultuary proceedings were prohibited, and regular indictments and formal proof exacted before the infliction of punishment.† Doubtless, the main object of Pliny in writing to Trajan, was, that he might receive his sanction for extending pardon to all those who were willing to renounce the profession of Christianity, and to return to their former religion. He satisfied himself, after minute inquiry, that there was no charge that could be substantiated against the new sect apart from their religion itself; that their proceedings at their private meetings were eminently favourable to good morals; and that so far from there being any appearance of a seditious spirit, they had discontinued their feasts of charity after they found them disagreeable to the Government. Their only crime, therefore, was their religion, so that when they abandoned it, nothing remained deserving of punishment. Besides, he shows that there was policy as well as justice in holding out the prospect of pardon in every case of retractation. He mentions, that when the persecution was at the severest, the cause of Christianity prospered. On the other hand, when milder measures were resorted to, when none were punished but those who *persisted* in their attachment to Christ, and when clemency was shown to all who ceased to be Christians, then many were found willing to return to the religion of the country, for the sake of safety, so that purchasers were again found for sacrificial victims, and the temples were once more filled with worshippers. Therefore, the conclusion is obvious; that if the method which Pliny had adopted received the sanction of the Emperor, there was every reason to suppose that a check would be put to the new superstition.

* Nothing could be more artful than the contrivance of the Priests to enervate and elude the law of Trajan respecting the mode of accusing the Christians. For the Presidents did not dare to regard with an inattentive ear the demands of the united commonalty, lest they might give occasion to sedition. Moreover, it was an established privilege of the Roman people, grounded either on ancient right or custom, of the exercise of which innumerable instances are to be found in the Roman history, that whenever the commonalty were assembled at the exhibition of public games and spectacles, whether it were in the city or provinces, they might demand what they pleased of the Emperor or the Presidents, and their demands thus made must be complied with. Properly this privilege belonged to the Roman people alone, whose united will possessed all the force of a law, inasmuch as the supreme Majesty of the empire was supposed to be resident therein; but by little and little the same thing came to be assumed as a right by the inhabitants of most of the larger cities. When the multitude, therefore, collected together at the public games, united in one general clamour for the punishment of the Christians at large, or of certain individuals belonging to that sect, the Presidents had no alternative but to comply with their demand, and sacrifice at least several innocent victims to their fury. (Mosheim's Commentaries.)

† Welsh's Elements of Church History, vol. i., p. 267.

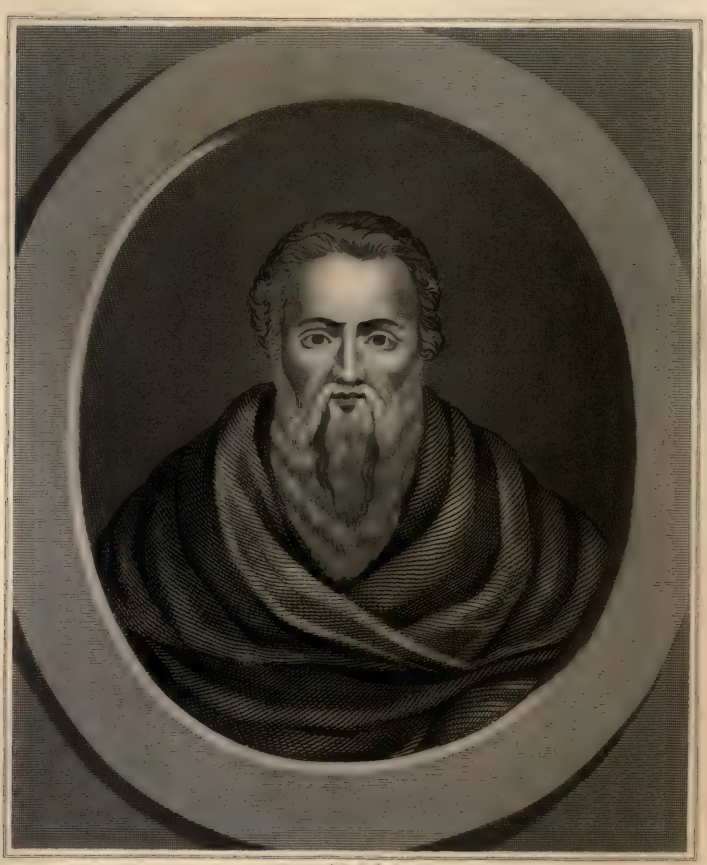
Notwithstanding the attempts of Gibbon and Mosheim * to characterize Pliny as a man exceedingly moderate and candid in his temper, and from whom flowed, in one perennial stream, the milk of human kindness, he was a bitter, an uncompromising, and cold-blooded persecutor. Out of his own mouth will we judge him. Because Pliny had never assisted at any judicial proceedings against Christians, and because he knew of no precedent for his conduct as a Magistrate when Christians were brought before him, are we warranted in saying, that there were no general laws or decrees of the Senate in force against the Christians? Though the Proconsul had never been present at any examinations of these persons before coming to Bithynia, the way in which he speaks of such investigations shows that he had often heard of them: and whether there were general laws or decrees of the Senate in force against the Christians, or no, is a subject of little importance; for Pliny knew that men were to be put to death for being Christians! He expresses no doubt upon this question; he asks for no instructions. He knew his duty, and he acted upon it; for he put many to death simply for this reason. The main point on which he wished for information, was, whether he might not pardon those who repented. He does not object to the practice of receiving anonymous charges; he expresses no sorrow on account of the multitudes who were likely to be subjected to punishment. He views the question solely as one of state, or rather of religious policy; and his object is not so much to save the shedding of human blood, as to preserve the interests of those who were connected with the heathen worship, and to maintain the honours of the ancient religion. The fact that such a Magistrate sentenced to death all those brought to his bar who persisted in their adherence to Christianity, and that he did not find himself warranted to extend final pardon to those who retracted without the sanction of the Emperor, speaks volumes as to the condition of the Christians at that period, as to the state of the laws, and as to what might have been endured in other quarters, where there were Governors less considerate. From the whole tenor of Pliny's letter, it is obvious that the general understanding was, that the mere fact of being a Christian inferred the punishment of death.†

Well might Tertullian exclaim, with reference to this rescript of the Emperor, "O sentence necessarily confounding itself! He for-

* Mr. Gibbon remarks, "The life of Pliny had been employed in the acquisition of learning, and in the business of the world. Since the age of nineteen, he had pleaded with distinction in the tribunals of Rome, filled a place in the Senate, had been invested with the honours of the Consulship, and had formed very numerous connexions with every order of men, both in Italy and the provinces. From *his* ignorance, therefore, we may derive some useful information. We may assure ourselves, that when he accepted the government of Bithynia, there were no general laws or decrees of the Senate in force against the Christians; that neither Trajan nor any of his virtuous predecessors, whose edicts were received into the civil and criminal jurisprudence, had publicly declared their intentions concerning the new sect; and that, whatever proceedings had been carried on against the Christians, there were none of sufficient weight and authority to establish a precedent for the conduct of a Roman Magistrate." (Decline and Fall, vol. ii., p. 419. Milman's Edition. 8vo. London, 1838. See also Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. Edit. Soames, vol. i., p. 132. 8vo. London, 1845; Mosheim's Commentaries, vol. ii., p. 48.)

† Welsh's Elements of Church History, vol. i., p. 452. Note KK.

biddeth that they should be inquired after, as though they were innocent; and commandeth that they should be punished, as though guilty! He spareth and rageth, winketh and punisheth! Why, O sentence, dost thou overreach thyself? If thou condemnest, why dost thou not also inquire? If thou inquirest not, why dost thou not also acquit? For tracking robbers through all the provinces, military stations are allotted. Against men accused of treason, and public enemies, every man is a soldier. The inquiry is extended to the accomplices, even to the accessaries. The Christian alone may not be inquired after, but may be brought before the court, as though inquiry had any other object than to bring him thither! Ye condemn him, therefore, when brought before you, whom none would have inquired after, who, I suppose, hath already deserved punishment, not because he is guilty, but because, when not to be inquired after, he was found! So then, neither in this do ye act towards us according to the rule of judging malefactors; namely, that to others ye apply tortures, when they deny, to make them confess; to the Christians alone, to make them deny: whereas, if it were a sin, we should indeed deny it, and ye by your tortures would compel us to confess it. Nor could you think that our crimes were, therefore, not to be inquired of by examinations, because ye were assured by the confession of the name, that they have been committed, seeing that to this day, from one who hath confessed himself a murderer, though ye know what murder is, ye, nevertheless, extort the whole train of circumstances touching the act. Wherefore, it is with the greatest perverseness that, when ye presume our guilt from the confession of our name, ye compel us by tortures to go back from our confession, that by denying the name, we may of course equally deny the crimes also, of which ye presumed us guilty from the confession of the name. But, I suppose, ye do not wish us, whom ye deem the worst of men, to die! For thus, doubtless, ye are wont to say to a murderer, 'Deny the fact;' to order the sacrilegious person to be torn with scourges if he persevere in his confession. If ye act not thus towards us as criminals, ye therefore judge us to be most innocent, since, as though we were most innocent, ye will not have us persevere in that confession, which ye know must be condemned by you of necessity, not of right. One crieth out, 'I am a Christian.' He sayeth what he is; thou wouldest hear what he is not. Sitting in authority to draw out the truth, from us alone do ye labour to draw out falsehood. 'I am,' saith he 'that which thou askest. If I am, why torture me to unsay it? I confess, and thou torturest me: what wouldest thou do, if I denied?' Certainly ye do not easily lend credit to others when they deny: us, if we deny, ye forthwith credit. Let this perverseness be cause of suspicion to you that there may be some power lurking in secret, which maketh you its ministers against all rule, against the very nature of judicial trial, against even the laws themselves. For, if I mistake not, the laws command, that malefactors be hunted out, not concealed; prescribe that such as confess be condemned, not acquitted. This the acts of your Senate, this the mandates of your Princes, this the Government, whose servants ye are,



IGNATIUS.

determineth. Your rule is civil, not despotic. For with tyrants tortures were used for punishment also: with you they are attempered down to the examination alone."*

We have the authority of Eusebius for stating, that at this time the people were excited in many different places to persecute the Christians;† but hitherto there has been little or no reason for connecting the Emperor with these scenes of cruelty. The curtain has fallen, and other acts, and fresh scenes, are in progress. Trajan was now engaged in conquering Dacia, and had neither time nor inclination to attend to the affairs of religion. The date of his return to Rome after the second Dacian war has not been determined by chronologists; and there is some disagreement as to the year in which he commenced a still greater undertaking, the subjugation of Parthia and Armenia. The first place at which Trajan stayed for any length of time was Antioch, being the Roman capital of Syria, and a war with Parthia or Armenia made it naturally the head-quarters of an army invading either of those countries. The foe was an ancient and formidable rival of Rome, and it is not unlikely that Trajan accompanied his human preparations with every means of procuring the divine favour. Many individuals about his court would not hesitate to prejudice his mind against the Christians; and we are told that the victories of Trajan in Dacia had excited him to seek for further fame in subduing the Christians. Seasons of public rejoicing, when the temples and amphitheatres were crowded in honour of the gods, were generally attended with some acts of cruelty towards the Christians. The religious ceremonies with which he prepared for his expedition to the East may have furnished him with numerous instances of annoyance and complaint. Nothing was more easy for the adversaries of Christianity than to persuade the Emperor, that persons who would not pray to the gods for his success, could not be faithful subjects. If Trajan therefore entered Antioch with prepossessions of this description, he was not likely to judge impartially when he had to interpose between the Christians and the Heathen.

Ignatius was Bishop of Antioch.‡ The early triumphs of the Gospel in this city were remarkable, inasmuch as they were gained over the most bitter enemies, on the most disadvantageous ground. Here Peter and Paul commenced those labours which terminated only with their martyrdom. Here the followers of Christ first received the appellation of "Christians:" so that if any church

* Tertull. Apologet., cap. ii.

† Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. iii., cap. 32, 33.

‡ Ignatius, surnamed Theophorus, was one of the earliest martyrs of whom any authentic record remains. Nora, in Sardinia, has been mentioned as the place of his birth; but it does not seem to possess any real claim to that honour. His parentage is equally uncertain; and little that is entitled to credit has reached us respecting his early history. There was a current tradition that he was the child whom our Saviour set before him as a pattern of humility; (Matt. xviii. 3;) but the legend seems to have originated in a signification of which the name Θεόφορος, if accented on the antepenultimate, admits, rather than the name to have been derived from this circumstance in question. Indeed, Ignatius himself, when brought before Trajan, explained the designation to mean ὁ Χριστον εχων στέρνοις, "one who carried Christ in his bosom;" and Chrysostom says expressly, that he had never seen the Lord. (Jortin.)

could set up the lofty claim of mother of all the Gentile churches, it was she ; and Rome must be content to rank among her daughters. Ignatius was probably a citizen of Antioch, whose education and endowments admirably fitted him for the duties he had to discharge. Having been a disciple of John, he was fully prepared to resist the artful insinuations and open avowals of the heretics with whom that Apostle had to contend. "The latter times" were indeed come,* and the churches of Asia were not exempt from the troubles predicted to Ephesus. The Jewish leaven was still fermenting in the Christian mass ; † and a worse corruption still (if it did not go hand in hand with the other) was the introduction of principles which afterwards became but too notorious, as maintained by the Gnostic heresy. These denied the reality of Christ's body; and asserted that the birth, baptism, crucifixion, and resurrection had been undergone by a mere phantom.‡ Whence their espousers were called *Docetæ*, or "Phantomists." Consistency obliged them to reject all Scripture, both of the Old and New Testament ; to withdraw from the eucharist of the church, which implied the reality of Christ's body ; and of course to deny the cardinal doctrines of the atonement, and the resurrection. The fruit was worthy of the tree, and their morality is accused of being as corrupt as their doctrine, at least in the mass of persons. They dealt not in works of charity, but in works unworthy of God.§ Ignatius, full of the Holy Spirit, detected and refuted this false doctrine. Such were the trials which the church had to endure from within. But those from without were sufficiently perplexing and sanguinary. The persecution under Domitian extended to Antioch, and the Bishop was in continual anxiety concerning the weaker members of his flock. When Trajan, elated with his victories on the Danube, resolved to renew them on the Euphrates, his army collected at Antioch, and he and Ignatius were soon brought in contact.

The Emperor was in no humour to bear opposition from the Christians. During his stay at Antioch he had nearly lost his life by a terrible earthquake which spread dreadful consternation through the city, crowded as it was with soldiery. A heavy persecution descended as usual upon the Christians. Ignatius, as the Bishop, would be eagerly sought after ; or, rather, he sought an interview with Trajan. The conference between these two men appears to have been short and expressive. Ignatius freely told the Monarch that he was wrong in worshipping the gods of the Gentiles, and declared to him the one God, and his only Son Jesus Christ. The conversation terminated in the following decree of the Emperor : ‖—"We give orders

* Acts xx. 29 ; 1 Tim. iv. 1. Ignat. Epist. ad Ephes., sect. 11.

† Ignat. Epist. ad Magnes., sect. 8, 9, 10. Epist. ad Philad., sect. 6.

‡ See the whole strain of Ignatius's Epistles. The opening of those to the Smyrnians and Trallians may serve as a specimen.

§ See Ignatii Epist. ad Smyrnæos, sect. 5, 6, 7. Evans's Biography of the Early Church, p. 57.

‖ TRAJAN. What art thou, wretch ! push'd on by thy ill genius,
Not only to oppose my will, nor own
The gods of Rome, but other simple souls
Inveigle to their ruin !

that Ignatius, who asserts that he carries about within himself the Crucified One, be put in bonds under the custody of soldiers, and carried to the great Rome,* to be food for the wild beasts, and to make sport for the people."† On hearing this, Ignatius exclaimed,

IGNATIUS. Noble Emperor,
I bear (and not in vain, through grace divine)
A name of better import than to be,
Or wretched, or dæmoniac. No, the man
Who is Theophorus can ne'er want joy;
Is raised above the reach of misery,
Is freed from dæmon's power; nor only freed,
But able to control and scourge the foe.
As I with ease their every snare dissolved,
Sustained by Christ the heavenly King.
TRAJAN. Explain,
What mean'st thou by the name Theophorus?
IGNATIUS. 'Tis he, whose soul is ever full of God;
'Tis he, who carries Christ within his breast.
TRAJAN. And think'st thou that in us no gods reside,
Enjoying as we do their aid in battle?
IGNATIUS. Whom you call gods, and misinform'd adore,
Are dæmons of the nations. One alone
True God there is, who made the earth and sky,
And all things in them; and one Jesus Christ,
Son of his love, whose kingdom be my portion!
TRAJAN. Thou mean'st the same whom Pilate crucified?
IGNATIUS. Him I do mean, who crucified my sin,
Together with its author; and subdued
The realm of darkness, (gladly I repeat
What I on this occasion prove and feel,)
Under their feet who carry Him in heart.
TRAJAN. So then the Crucified lives yet in thee?
IGNATIUS. He does; for thus the gracious promise runs:
"In them I'll walk, and in their hearts I'll dwell."
TRAJAN. Thus, therefore, I conclude: Since this fond man
Affirms with frantic phrase, that still in him
The criminal lives, whom to the cross we doom'd,
Let him be carried to imperial Rome,
And, worried by wild beasts, divert the people.
Ten of our soldiers guard him; and just now
Put on his chains. We'll haste to higher cares.
From quell'd opinions pass to conquer lands.

—Works of the late Rev. John Gambold, M.A. 12mo., p. 48. Bath, 1789.

* It may justly seem strange, and it was that which puzzled the great Scaliger, why he should be sent so vast a way from Antioch in Syria, to be martyred in Rome. First, It was usual with the Governors of provinces, where the malefactors were more than ordinarily eminent, either for the quality of their persons, or the nature of their crimes, to send them to Rome, that their punishment might be made exemplary in the eye of the world. Secondly, His enemies were not willing he should suffer at home, where he was too much honoured and esteemed already, and where his death would but raise him into a higher veneration with the people, and settle their minds in a firmer belief of that faith which he had taught them, and which they saw him sealing with his blood. Thirdly, By so long a journey, they hoped that in all places where he came, men would be more effectually terrified from embracing that religion, which they saw so much objected to, and resented by the Emperor, and when the profession thereof could not be purchased but at so dear a rate; besides the probability, that by this usage, the constancy of Ignatius himself might be broken, and he forced to yield.

† "Tacitus," says a modern writer, "could have described this event with a coolness which Gibbon might applaud. The Roman people's fondness for these shows was encouraged by their rulers, we believe, to divert their attention from the vices of the internal government, as well as for the purpose of keeping up that fierce spirit which made them the conquerors of the world. We have proof enough in the Annals of Tacitus, that no criminals thrown to the lions afforded the spectators a delight equal to the savage joy with which they gloated on the destruction of the Christians. When there-

"I thank thee, O Master, that thou hast deigned to honour me with perfect love towards thee, binding me thus with iron bonds in fellowship with thy Apostle Paul." He put on the chains joyfully; and having prayed for the Antiochean church, he commended it with tears to the divine care and protection, and surrendered himself to the custody of his guard.*

Accompanied by his Deacons, Philo and Agathopus, he was conveyed down to Seleucia, the port of Antioch, and thus entered upon that track of Paul, so much of which he followed with joyful recognition on his way to Rome. Here he was put on board a ship which was to coast the southern and western parts of Asia Minor. Why this route was determined upon, consisting of so many circuitous movements, as preferable to a more direct passage from Seleucia to Rome, we know not. Providence overruled the event for good, by administering comfort and edification to the churches in the course of the journey. They landed for a period at Smyrna, where Ignatius had the gratification of meeting with Polycarp, who was Bishop of that see, and who, like himself, had enjoyed a personal acquaintance with John. They were now to meet for the last time, after many years of separation. One was on his appointed road to the death by which he was to glorify the Lord, and the other, perhaps, was already conscious that himself was destined to follow. His arrival at Smyrna produced a lively emotion throughout the Asiatic churches; and the principal of them sent to pay due reverence to the holy Bishop by

fore a venerable Bishop from the East, where Trajan was rivalling the glories of Pompey and of Cæsar, was sent to be exposed, it seemed as though the hated religion was led a captive to grace the triumph of the conqueror, to swell the pride of the Romans, and to conciliate the favour of the gods. We do not sympathize in the wonder of Scaliger, and other scholars, that Trajan should remove Ignatius from Antioch, where his virtues had made him popular, to Rome. The punishment was more terrible at Rome than it could be at Antioch. The dangers and troubles of the journey seemed likely to bend the spirit and to shake the faith of an aged man; his absence from Antioch would weaken the Christian cause in that city; while his death at Rome would strike terror into his party throughout the empire. Trajan, in common with all the heathen Emperors, regarded the religion of the capitol as the foundation of Roman greatness. We learn from Cicero, from Valerius Maximus, from the frequent consultation of oracles, from the Latin poets and historians, from votive tablets and inscriptions, from the appeals of the Christian Apologists, and from the confession of those who abandoned the pagan for the Christian faith, that belief in the religion of Rome was, generally, both more sincere and stronger than Gibbon would lead his readers to imagine. There are many traces of this in the Epistles of Pliny: in his panegyric on Trajan, he praises him for his 'præcipua sanctitas,' eminent devotion to the gods of Rome. How mild soever the directions sent by Trajan to Pliny for the treatment of Christians in his province, we cannot read the commentaries of Vossius on those Epistles, nor, indeed, the Epistles themselves, without perceiving that this was the coolness of a politician, believing it to be the best mode of quenching a dangerous superstition, rather than the liberality of a philosopher disposed to tolerate a religion which, with all other religions, he despised." (Brit. Quart. Review, vol. iv., p. 392.)

* Dr. Burton conjectures that Ignatius being sent to Rome was owing to some persons who had attended the Emperor from thence, and who wished to gratify their friends at home, by sending to them the man, who was more looked up to than all the Christians in the East. The punishment to which he was condemned, was generally reserved for culprits of the lowest condition; and the Christians were, perhaps, viewed in this light by the Heathen. It was also inflicted upon persons convicted of magic or sacrilege, both of which crimes were laid to the charge of the Christians; and it seems to have been a common thing, in the second century, to put them to death by exposure to wild beasts. (Lectures on Eccles. Hist.)

deputations of the most honourable men among them. Ephesus, who had seen him advance in wisdom and grace as the disciple of the beloved Apostle, sent her Bishop, Onesimus, with his Deacons, Barrhus and Crocus and Euplus and Fronto. The Magnesians came represented in their Bishop, Damas, with Bassus and Apollonius and Sotion. The Trallians deputed their Bishop, Polybius, and the Philadelphians their Bishop also. To this assembly Ignatius preferred a fervent request for the co-operation of their prayers to support him in the fight of a good confession, while he bestowed upon them a solemn charge to beware of heresy which, like ill weeds, was growing rank around them.* Ignatius took the opportunity of writing from Smyrna to the churches over which these Bishops presided; and his Epistles to the Ephesians, Trallians, and Magnesians, are still extant. Hearing of some Ephesians who were going to Rome, and who were likely to arrive there more expeditiously than himself, he addressed a letter to the church in that city. His principal object in writing was to prevent any attempt which the Roman Christians might have made to procure a reprieve from the death which was awaiting him. He expresses himself not only willing, but anxious, to meet the wild beasts in the amphitheatre; and there never, perhaps, was a more perfect pattern of resignation than that which we find in this epistle. He says, "I write to the churches, and signify to them all, that I am willing to die for God, unless you hinder me. I beseech you that you show not an unseasonable good-will towards me. Suffer me to be food to the wild beasts, by whom I shall attain unto God. For I am the wheat of God, and I shall be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ. Rather encourage the beasts, that they may become my sepulchre, and may leave nothing of my body; that, being dead, I may not be troublesome to any." †

From Smyrna he proceeded to Troas, where he was met, as before, by some of the neighbouring Bishops; and the Bishop of Philadelphia became the bearer of a letter which he wrote to the Christians in that city. He also wrote from the same place to the church of Smyrna; and the personal regard which he had for Polycarp, the Bishop of that city, will explain why he also wrote to him, and made it his dying request, that he would attend to the church of Antioch. The military guard must have treated Ignatius with great harshness to have wrung from him the complaint which he makes. They had little or no consideration for the age of their prisoner, and were eager to take him to Rome in time for the games of a great festival. "From Syria even unto Rome, I fight with beasts both by sea and land, both night and day; being bound to ten leopards, that is to say, to such a band of soldiers, who, though treated with all manner of kindness, are the worse for it." ‡ Those who had accompanied Ignatius from Smyrna left him; and, with his two Deacons, he sailed to

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. iii., cap. 36.
† Ignatii Epist. ad Romanos, sect. 4.
‡ Ignatii Epist. ad Romanos, sect. 5.

Greece, and landed at Neapolis.* Their journey by land, through Macedonia, appears to have been rapid. The churches which Paul had founded in Europe now lay in his road, and must have deeply engaged the curiosity and study of one who was so eager in following upon his track. At Philippi he received numerous tokens of affection and respect. At length he quitted the Grecian continent at Epidamnus.

Ignatius and his company embarked once more on the western coast of Epirus, and, crossing the Adriatic, shortly arrived at Rome. Some delay was occasioned by their being baffled by the wind in an attempt to land at Puteoli, and considerable disappointment to the Bishop, who wished to enter Italy at the same point as Paul, and pursue the track of his journey to the imperial city. They made land, however, at the port which was at the mouth of the Tiber. The soldiers hurried him hence, since they feared the festival was fast running to its close; and Ignatius, with equal eagerness, accompanied them.† On reaching Rome, he was immediately surrounded by the brethren, "who were full of fear and joy. For they rejoiced that God had vouchsafed them the company of Theophorus; but were afraid, when they considered that such a one was brought thither to die." ‡ Some of the brethren, notwithstanding the earnest entreaty contained in his letter, eagerly demanded to interpose for his life. But he zealously repelled the proposal, not only urging the expressions of his epistle, which we have already quoted, but also urging others: "May I enjoy the wild beasts that have been prepared for me, which I wish may exert all their fierceness upon

* The seven epistles which were written by Ignatius from Smyrna and Troas, are still extant, and have frequently been published. Next to the writings of the Apostles, they are perhaps the most interesting documents which the church possesses. They are the writings of a man who was contemporary with the Apostles, and who had certainly received more than the ordinary influence of the Holy Spirit. We must not expect in seven short letters, written by a man who was on his way to execution, to meet with anything like an argumentative exposition of the Christian faith. But they are filled with expressions of the most sincere and affecting piety; and the question of church government cannot be discussed, as far as relates to primitive customs, without the perusal of the epistles of Ignatius. It is said that other epistles are extant, which the Bishop is supposed to have written as he passed through Philippi. They are said to be addressed to the churches of Antioch and Tarsus, and to Heros, who was then a Deacon in the church of Antioch, and succeeded Ignatius in the bishopric. There is also said to be an epistle which the martyr wrote to the Christians at Philippi, and another which was addressed to a woman of the name of Mary. It is now generally acknowledged that these five epistles are spurious. Two epistles to St. John, and one to the Virgin Mary, which only exist in Latin, do not deserve even to be mentioned. (Dr. Burton.)

† There are accounts which speak of his being put to various tortures, and of some days having elapsed before he was exposed in the amphitheatre. But this seems to have been an invention of later times. (See Surius, De Probatis Sanctorum. Sim. Metaphrast., Febru. 1.) The authentic narrative leaves no room for such an occurrence. Subsequent to the original interview with Trajan, it has been stated, that "he was cast into prison, where he was subjected to the most merciless torments, being cruelly scourged, and obliged to hold fire in his hands, while his sides were burning with papers dipped in oil, his feet set upon live coals, and his flesh torn with red-hot pincers." In reference to all such and similar statements, we are bound to say, "Non probantur."

‡ "Obviamus fratribus, timore et gaudio repletis; gaudentibus quidem in quibus dignificabantur eo quod Theophori consortio; timentibus autem quod ad mortem talis ducebatur." (Acta Sancti Ignatii.)

me; and for which end I will encourage them, that they may be sure to devour me, and not serve me as they have some, whom out of fear they have not touched. But, if they will not do it willingly, I will provoke them to it. Pardon me in this matter: I know what is profitable for me. Now I begin to be a disciple; nor shall any thing move me, whether visible or invisible, that I may attain to Christ Jesus. Let fire and the cross, let the companies of wild beasts, let breaking of bones and tearing of members, let the shattering in pieces of the whole body, and all the wicked torments of the devil come upon me; only let me enjoy Jesus Christ." * Such were the strong expressions of this honest and ardent martyr. After having embraced them all, they knelt down, and he in the midst of them besought the Son of God in behalf of the churches, for the ceasing of the persecution, and for the mutual love of the brethren.

The Bishop was forthwith led to the amphitheatre. "There, insolent with revelling, and maddened to cruelty by the sight of the blood of dying gladiators, the people of Rome were expecting the appearance of the old man, and raised, no doubt, a shout when he was produced before them. For the first time in his life he beheld the interior of an amphitheatre,—a sight forbidden to the eyes of a Christian. He beheld the assembled majesty of the Lords of this world, their Senate, their Magistrates, and, O strange and impious spectacle! their women and consecrated virgins; † looking upon death's shocking and varied agonies with composed countenances, and almost drinking in the streams of blood with their eyes, amid savage delight. It was truly the temple of the Prince of this world. Can we wonder that in such a place generally began the first cry for persecution; that there resided his peculiar inspiration; that there the sight of a helpless and venerable old man, of blameless life, and yet brought to suffer the death of the worst malefactors, moved no pity, but rather provoked rage? How little did the mighty ones of that day imagine that the obscure sufferer who stood before them would leave behind him an everlasting name, to their

* Ignatii Epist. ad Romanos, sect. 5.

† "The Heathens, with whom there is no perfection of truth, because God is not their Teacher of truth, define good and evil according to their own will and pleasure, making that in one case good, which in another is bad; and that in one case bad, which in another is good. Thus, therefore, it has come to pass, that the very man who would hardly lift up his cloak in public for his bodily necessity, cannot in the circus disport himself in any other way than by obtruding all his shame upon the eyes of all; and he who guardeth the ears of his virgin daughter from every lewd word, doth himself carry her to the theatre to such words and actions; and the very man who, in the streets restraineth or protesteth against one that carrieth on a quarrel by blows, doth in the race-course give his voice in favour of more serious battles; and he who shuddereth at the corpse of a man that hath died in common course, doth in the amphitheatre bend down most enduring eyes upon bodies mangled and torn in pieces, and begrimed with their own blood; nay, he who cometh to the show to testify his approval of the punishment of a murderer, doth himself, with whips and rods, urge on the gladiator to murder against his will; he, too, who demandeth the lion for each more notable murderer, demandeth for the atrocious gladiator the staff and the hat; while he sendeth for him back again who is slain, for a near view of his countenance, more pleased to examine him closely whom he wished to be put to death at a distance." (Tertull., De Spect., cap. xxi.)

shame, and to his Master's glory; and that the blood of the saints, with which they were now drunken, should be the means of making many like him, until their whole empire should be full of them! Some few hearts, perhaps, at that moment were pricked with the first entrance of God's grace. They pitied, they admired, they loved, and they believed. They who began with the amphitheatre, ended with the church. But the vast multitude, with shouts, beheld the preacher of love and peace placed upon the spot which was assigned to assassins and murderers, and cheered the beasts as they were loosed upon him. The agony of the blessed martyr was short. The beasts quickly despatched him; and so ravenously, that only the harder and more rugged bones were left. Thus was fulfilled his desire, that the beasts might be his tomb, and leave nothing of his body. So should he give trouble to none in collecting his remains." *

The faithful Deacons of Ignatius who had accompanied him from Antioch to Rome, doubtless collected those relics of him which remained, and conveyed them to the place over which he had presided. It appears from a letter of Pliny,† that if the friend of a deceased person wished to remove his remains, he was to apply for leave to the College of Priests: such permission was probably obtained before the persons who had journeyed with Ignatius from Antioch, could venture to gather up his bones, and carry them back to their own city. If we did not know that this was the case, we might have thought that the indulgence would neither have been asked nor granted in the present excited state of public feeling. But the spectators in the amphitheatre had had their gratification; their thirst for blood had been satisfied; and the Priests would perhaps be glad that the bones of the martyr should be carried to Antioch, rather than continue at Rome, where they might serve to animate the Christians to further resistance. Not a word is to be found concerning anything like religious worship being paid to his remains. We read of their being carried to Antioch, and being received on the road with nearly the same honours which were paid to the holy martyr himself, when he visited the different cities. But no trace of superstition appears in any of these demonstrations of piety and affection.‡ The friends of Ignatius speak of his remains as being invaluable, and that they were deposited in the cemetery near one of the gates in the suburbs of Antioch.§ Nearly three hundred years after the decease of Ignatius, a panegyric, splendid in all the ornaments of human eloquence, was pronounced over him from "the golden mouth" of one of his fellow-citizens, and Minister of his own church, who could boast, and was worthy of, a spiritual lineage directly derived from him. But the simple and apostolical spirit of the martyr would have been equally astonished and dissatisfied at the oratorical flourish of Chrysostom, and his sight would not have been

* Evans's Biography of the Early Church, p. 69.
† Pliny's Letters. Melmoth's edition, vol. ii., book x., letter 73.
‡ Burton's Lectures on Eccles. Hist., vol. ii., p. 32. Edit. 8vo. Oxford, 1833.
§ Hieron. De Viris Illustribus, cap. xvi.

less pained than his ears, could he have beheld the pompous decoration and ceremony of the place where it was delivered.*

In the persecution which continued to rage, even subsequent to the death of Ignatius, numerous individuals sealed the truth with their blood. Among these, historians mention Phocas, the Bishop of Pontus, who, because he would not sacrifice unto Neptune, was cast into a burning lime-kiln, and afterwards into a scalding bath, where he expired: Sulpitius and Servilianus, two Romans, whose wives are said to have been Euphrosyne and Theodora, whom Sabina was instrumental in converting to the faith of Christ, were also martyred during Trajan's reign. Onesimus also is said to have been stoned to death at Rome, together with Barsimæus, the Bishop of Edessa, in Mesopotamia. The former was a native of Phrygia, and servant to Philemon, of Colosse, from whom he had absconded; but meeting with Paul at Rome, was induced to return. His master voluntarily gave him his freedom, and recommended him to Paul as his spiritual father, who constantly employed him as a messenger to the churches: subsequently he was raised to the bishopric of Ephesus. The chronology of this portion of the reign of Trajan is involved in very great perplexity; but if, as is supposed, the Emperor marched from Antioch in the year 107, he probably finished the war in 110 or 111, and returned to Rome. In the course of these years he conquered the Armenians and Parthians, beside less civilized nations, and took the capitals of Seleucia, Ctesiphon, and Babylon. It is stated that after taking these cities, Trajan, according to ancient custom, purified his army, and sent into Armenia ten thousand of his troops, who refused to join in the sacrifices, as being Christians. It is added, that Romulus, who was high in the Emperor's household, remonstrated with him upon the imprudence of this act, and avowed himself a Christian; in consequence of which, he was beaten by order of the Emperor, and then beheaded. The ten thousand soldiers are reported to have been afterwards crucified in the mountains of Armenia. The story is to be found in the Martyrologies,†

* Evans's Biography of the Early Church, p. 70. "Ignatius is better known (by one party venerated, by another discarded) as the advocate of Episcopacy, than as a humble and suffering believer of the Gospel. Whatever might be his reasons for so strongly urging the episcopal authority, whatever the extent may be in which his anxiety on this head was a departure from the tone of earlier days, whatever mischiefs to the church have arisen from the use which other men have made of what he wrote, we confess that the repeated study of his Epistles has raised our admiration of his practical prudence, his glowing spirit of devotion, his strong attachment to the Gospel, his fervent charity to Christians, his matchless courage, his constancy even to a dreadful death. In our coolest moods we blame him for some excess, both in his zeal for his office, and in his desire for martyrdom; but happy are they who can pierce through these imperfections to lay hold of the glorious principles, and the divine affections, which made Ignatius what he was in such a country, and at such a time. We raise no shrines for martyrs. We observe no festivals to their honour. We light no lamps at their tombs. We chant no litanies at their anniversaries. We expect from them no intercession. Yet we envy not the insensibility that is neither touched by the memory of their graces, nor edified by the record of their sufferings. The 'martyrs of science' are remembered by the studious, and the martyrs of liberty by the free: why should the martyrs of religion be forgotten by the saints?" (Brit. Quart. Rev., vol. iv., p. 394.)

† Baronii Martyrol. Roman., Sept. 5. Simon Metaphrast. apud Surium, De Probatis Sanctorum, Sept. 5. Tillemont Memoires, tom. i., art. vi., p. 194. Foxe says,

and is adopted by Baronius; but though scenes of this sort were not unlikely to happen when the whole army was called upon to join in sacrifice, it is difficult to believe that Trajan would have so weakened his forces by sending away ten thousand soldiers, or that so large a body was put to death by crucifixion. To some it will perhaps appear incredible that so many Christians should have been found in the army, and we may at least conclude that the numbers have been exaggerated; but the martyrdom of Romulus, and the circumstances which led to it, may not be altogether devoid of foundation.*

The sun of Trajan set in blood. The Rabbinical writings at this period are crowded with accounts of the sufferings of the Jews; † but at the same time they are so intermingled with that which is fabulous, that it is difficult to decide how far they rest on the foundation of truth. Before the conclusion of the war, and the final settlement of the East, the Jews, who had been dispersed into various parts, excited a fearful rebellion in several of the provinces of the Roman empire, taking occasion, from certain earthquakes ‡ with which that

that "it is signified in the histories that in the time of Hadrian, Zeno, a nobleman of Rome, with ten thousand two hundred and three, was slain for Christ. (Baronii Martyr. Rom. July 9th.) Henry de Herford and Bergomensis make mention of ten thousand as being crucified in the day of this Hadrian, on Mount Ararat, adorned with crowns of thorn, and thrust into the sides with sharp darts, after the example of the Lord's passion." The editor of the new edition of the Acts and Monuments, says that Foxe confounds the Zeno just mentioned with another Zeno whose martyrdom is celebrated in Baronius's Martyrology, on Sept. 5th. Baronius there states, that he was one of a number of soldiers, one thousand one hundred and seven in all, others say eleven thousand, who, for professing Christ, were martyred at Melitene, in Armenia. A surmise has arisen whether the two stories are not founded on the same occurrence.

* Burton's Lectures on Eccles. Hist., lect. xiv.

† "It is related," says Milman, (Hist. of the Jews, vol. iii., p. 109,) "that unfortunately the birth-day of a Prince fell on the anniversary of the fatal 9th of August; and while the whole Roman empire was rejoicing, the Jews alone were bewailing, in ill-timed lamentations, the fate of their temple. Again, while the imperial family were in the deepest mourning for the loss of a daughter, the unlucky Jews were celebrating, with noisy mirth, their feast of lamps. The indignant Empress exclaimed, 'Before you march against the barbarians, sweep this insolent people from the face of the earth.' Trajan surrounded a vast number of Jews with his legions, and ordered them to be hewn down. He afterwards offered their wives either to share the fate of their husbands, or to submit to the embraces of his soldiery. 'What thou hast done to those beneath the earth, do to those who are upon it.' Such was the answer of the women. Their blood was mingled with that of their husbands; and the sea that broke upon the shores of Cyprus was tinged with the red hue of carnage. If there be any truth in this legend, it recoiled before long from those shores in a tide which showed still more visible signs of unrelenting vengeance. But independent of the improbability of the whole story, and its inconsistency with the character of the Emperor, the family of Trajan make a great figure in this as in other Jewish legends; yet it is almost certain that he had no children."

‡ Trajan was certainly in Antioch during a tremendous earthquake, probably subsequent to the martyrdom of Ignatius, which, according to some writers, happened in the year 115, while others have placed it in the end of 110. Great part of Antioch was destroyed by this earthquake, and by fires which accompanied it. Famine, also, and pestilence were added to these dreadful visitations; and since the Christians were often accused of bringing down these signs of anger from the gods, it is possible that they suffered upon this occasion. Trajan is described as seeking to avert the evil by no common remedies; which seems to allude to some kind of religious expiation; and if he listened to the popular notion concerning the Christians, he might have thought himself justified in appeasing the wrath of heaven by the blood of the Christians. Nicephorus certainly speaks of a persecution at Antioch, while Trajan was staying there, and he

part of the country had recently been visited, and which they cordially believed betokened the speedy downfal of the Roman influence and power; or, what is still more probable, during the war of Trajan with Parthia, when the Roman legions were almost entirely withdrawn from the African provinces, and a few feeble garrisons only remained to maintain the peace, intelligence was received that the Jews of Egypt and Cyrene had taken arms, and were perpetrating the most dreadful atrocities against the inhabitants of those districts, both Greeks and Romans. The cause of this insurrection is not known; but when we remember the implacable animosities of the Jew and Gentile, which had been handed down as an inheritance for centuries, it is by no means surprising that, directly the coercive authority of the Roman troops was removed, a violent collision would take place. Nor is it improbable that the Greeks, who had been suffering grievous exactions from a rapacious Roman Governor, might take up their old quarrel, and, in the absence of the Romans, endeavour to indemnify themselves by the plunder of their more industrious, perhaps more wealthy, neighbours. On which side hostilities began, we know not; but the Jews, even if they only apprehended an attack, had horrible reminiscences of recent disasters or traditions not very remote of the days of Caligula; and might, not unnaturally, think that there was wisdom in endeavouring to be the first in the field, and that it was better to perish with arms in their hands, than stand still, as in former times, to be tamely pillaged and butchered. All Egypt, both Alexandria, and the Thebais, with Cyrene, arose at once. In Egypt the Jews had at first some success; but the Greeks fell back on Alexandria, mastered the Jews within the city, and murdered the whole race. Maddened by this intelligence, as well as by the memory of former cruelties, the Jews of Cyrene, headed by Lucuas and Andrew, by some supposed to be, though improbably, two names of the same individual, swept all over Lower Egypt, where they were joined by a host of their countrymen, and penetrated into the Thebais, or even farther, and exacted the most dreadful retribution for the present and the past. Horrid tales were told of the atrocities they committed,—some of their rulers they sawed asunder from head to foot; they flayed their bodies, and clothed themselves with their skins; twisted their entrails, and wore them as girdles, and anointed themselves with blood. We are even told that this people, so scrupulous in the refusal of all unclean food, nevertheless feasted on the bodies of their enemies. With barbarity for which they could quote higher precedent, they are said to have thrown them to the wild beasts, and forced them to fight on the theatres as gladiators: two hundred and twenty thousand fell before their remorseless vengeance. Whether these cannibal atrocities were true or not, that they should be propagated and credited shows the detestation in which the race was held. Lupus, the Roman Governor, meanwhile, without troops, sat an inactive spectator of this devastation; while Lucuas, the

describes it in some detail; but this writer, when unsupported by other authority, is to be read with great caution. (Burton's Lectures.) The Jews beheld these portents as indicative of other events.

Jewish leader, is reported to have assumed the style and character of King.

The flame spread to Cyprus, where the Jews were numerous and wealthy. One Artemio placed himself at their head, they rose and massacred *two hundred and forty thousand* of their fellow-citizens; and the populous city of Salamis became a desert. The revolt in Cyprus was first suppressed: Hadrian, afterwards Emperor, landed on the island, and marched to the assistance of the few inhabitants who had been able to act on the defensive. He defeated the Jews, expelled them from the island, to whose beautiful coasts no Jew was ever after permitted to approach. If one were accidentally wrecked on the inhospitable shore, he was instantly put to death. Martius Turbo was sent by sea, for the purpose of expedition, with a considerable force of horse and foot, to the coast of Cyrene. As far as the campaign can be traced, it seems that he marched against Andrew, and, after much hard fighting, suppressed the insurrection in that province, and then turned upon Egypt, where Lucuas still made head. This insurgent, according to a tradition preserved by Abulfharagi, attempted to force his way by the Isthmus of Suez; and some, at least, of his followers found their way to Palestine. The loss of the Jews, as might be expected, was immense: their own traditions report, that as many fell in this disastrous war, as originally escaped from Egypt under Moses,—six hundred thousand men. Cyprus was scarcely subdued, and the war was still raging in Egypt, when tidings arrived that the Jews of Mesopotamia were in arms. Probably the eastern Jews had found that, by the conquests of Trajan, they had changed masters for the worse. Under the Parthian Kings they had lived in peace, unmolested in their religion, sometimes making proselytes of the highest rank, (in the case of Izates,) of Kings themselves; and they were oppressed by no exclusive taxation. The Jews of Africa and Syria might have looked with repining envy on their more prosperous brethren in Babylonia: the scene of the great captivity was now become the only dwelling of Jewish peace, and Jewish independence; while the land of milk and honey flowed with the bitter streams of servitude and persecution. Even if the Babylonian Jews did not, as gratitude and policy would equally have urged, during the war between Rome and her eastern rival, manfully take arms in favour of their protectors against the enemies and oppressors of their race; if they left the armies of Parthia to fight their own battles, and quietly waited to be transferred to the conqueror; yet when they were included, by the victories of Trajan, within the pale of Roman oppression, visited in their turn by that fierce soldiery which had trampled on the ruins of Jerusalem,—made liable, perhaps, to a capitation tax for the maintenance of a heathen temple,—it was by no means surprising if they endeavoured to shake off the galling and unwonted yoke. Their insurrection was soon suppressed by the vigour of Lucius Quietus, a man of Moorish race, and considered the ablest soldier in the Roman army. The commission of Quietus was not only to subdue, but to expel, the Jews from the whole district. The Jews defended themselves with obstinate

courage, and, though overpowered, still remained in Mesopotamia.* In the midst of this bloodshed Trajan died, not without suspicion of having been poisoned; a Prince of great ability, either for the command of an army, or the government of an empire; and, had not his actions been stained with his severity towards the Christians, he might with propriety have been recognised as the greatest Emperor in the pagan world. His numerous excellences rendered his memory valuable to the Romans; so that, among the many and divine honours which were awarded to him after his demise, it became customary, in succeeding reigns, when blessings were invoked upon an Emperor recently chosen, to desire that the fortune of Augustus, and the goodness of Trajan, might descend upon him, as the greatest benefit of which he could possibly be the partaker.

"We are perhaps justified in concluding," says Dr. Burton, "from a general review of the reign of Trajan, that the progress of Christianity was not impeded during that period by any systematic opposition of the government. The Emperor's attention was directed to the new religion by Pliny; but, like many other subjects which were mentioned in letters from the provinces, this, perhaps, did not dwell long upon his mind; and we may infer from the correspondence itself, that neither Trajan nor Pliny had troubled themselves about Christians before. It has been mentioned, that the Emperor's answer formed a precedent which was often acted upon with great cruelty in the course of the present century; but we do not meet with any other instance in the course of the late reign. We shall see reason to think, that a time of peace was more injurious to the disciples than war, as giving the Heathen more leisure and opportunity to notice their proceedings; and the late Emperor was so constantly engaged in military expeditions, that, if such a circumstance were favourable to the Christians, it may account, in some measure, for their religion making such a rapid advance. That this was the case in the former part of the second century, cannot be doubted. The martyrdoms of Symeon and Ignatius arrest our attention on account of the rank and the fortitude of the sufferers, and the iniquity of their sentence. But we are not told, in either case, that they had many companions in death; and the perpetrators of such cruelties are apt to forget, that a party does not become less attached to its opinions, or less zealous in support of them, by seeing its leaders suffer martyrdom with firmness. The death of Ignatius caused the loss of one individual to the church; but their enemies were not aware that, by leading him in a kind of triumph from Antioch to Rome, and allowing him to touch at several intermediate places, they were doing the greatest service to the cause which they were wishing to destroy." †

* Milman's History of the Jews, vol. iii., p. 114.

† Burton's History of the Christian Church, p. 187. 12mo. Sixth edition. London.

CHAPTER II.

Accession of Hadrian—His Birth—And Qualifications—Abandons a Portion of the Roman Territory—Trajan and Hadrian contrasted—The Empire is consolidated—Achievements in Britain—Hadrian's personal Character—And Versatility in respect of Religion—The unsettled State of the Jewish Nation—Hadrian's Treatment of that People—Condition of the Christian Church at Jerusalem—Is persecuted—Swift Succession of Bishops—Alexandria—Position of Christianity in that City—Heresies—Hadrian visits Alexandria—Quinquennalia—Palilia—Fatal Character of these Feasts—Symphorosa and her Sons—The Mother is brought before the Emperor, and undergoes Martyrdom—Her Sons suffer on the following Day—Eustachius and his Family are put to Death—Faustinus and Jovita suffer—General Order of Hadrian with regard to the Christians—Catacombs—Their Origin—And Description—Were Places of Refuge and Worship to the ancient Church—And also of Interment—Dr. Maitland quoted—Martyrdom suffered in them—Travels of Hadrian—Publius—Quadratus—Aristides—Apologies of—Persecution of the Church—Influence of the Populace—The pagan Priesthood avail themselves of it—Serapia and Sabina are brought before Berillus—Serapia is threatened with Violation—Tortured and beheaded—Sabina is martyred—Serenus Granius—His Appeal to Hadrian—The Emperor's Answer to Minutius Fundanus—Effects of this Rescript—The Deification of Antinous—The imperial Edict of Hadrian—Dr. Burton quoted—Effect of the Edict on the Christians—Barcochebas—His Cruelty toward the Christians—Insurrection of the Jews—Their temporary Success—Rufus the Prefect—Julius Severus—The Jews are vanquished, and experience unheard-of Cruelties—Hadrian's Plan of annihilating the Jews—Ælia Capitolina—State of the Church at the Close of Hadrian's Reign—Celsus the Epicurean, attacks Christianity—Is replied to by Origen—Description of the Work of Celsus—Dr. Doddridge and Leland quoted—Death of Hadrian—His Character.

HADRIAN was at Antioch when he succeeded to the empire upon the death of Trajan. He was by descent a Spaniard, and of Italica, the same city where Trajan was born; his mother's name was Domitia Paulina, of Cales in Spain. He was nephew to Trajan by his mother, others say by his father; though some assert, that he was the son of his cousin-german, and was married to Sabina, Trajan's sister's daughter. When he entered upon the empire he was about forty years of age, and of popular talents, having in the last reign sustained the highest offices, both of a civil and military character, with great honour to himself, and usefulness to the commonwealth. His reign commenced with what would be considered by many a disreputable act,—the abandonment of the country to the east of the Euphrates; but it might be doubted whether the empire were really weakened by its limits being contracted. It is true that, shortly after the death of Trajan, and before Hadrian had left the East, the Parthians, and some of the nations recently conquered, resumed their former courage, and revolted; insurrections also took place in the distant isle of Britain. All these Hadrian might with little difficulty have subdued, as he stood in need of neither courage nor force. Trajan insatiably thirsted after honour and fame, and seized every oppor-

tunity to enlarge the boundaries of the Roman arm; Hadrian's principal care was to preserve the ancient limits entire, without grasping after extended conquests: he therefore relinquished a considerable part of the territories in the East, judging Parthia, Media, Mesopotamia, and other distant provinces, greater inconvenience to the Roman empire than advantage; and for the better security of contiguous places, he made the Euphrates the boundary and barrier, and placed his legions upon its banks. The active genius of Hadrian was withdrawn from all warlike enterprises and foreign conquests: its whole care was centred on the consolidation of the empire within its narrower and uncontested limits, and on the internal regulation of the vast confederacy of nations which were gradually becoming more and more assimilated as subjects or members of the great European empire. The remotest provinces, for the first time, beheld the presence of the Emperor, not at the head of an army summoned to defend the insulted barriers of the Roman territory, or pushing forward the advancing line of conquest, but in more peaceful array, providing for the future security of the frontier by impregnable fortresses; * adorning the more flourishing cities with public buildings, bridges, and aqueducts; inquiring into the customs, manners, and even the religion, of the more distant parts of the world; encouraging commerce, promoting the arts; in short, improving, by salutary regulations, this long period of peace to the prosperity and civilization of the whole empire.†

The personal character of Hadrian was a strange amalgamation of versatility and ambition. He was by turns an excellent Prince, a ridiculous sophist, and a jealous tyrant.‡ The general tenor of his conduct deserved praise; but in the first days of his reign he put to death four consular Senators, his personal enemies, and men who had been judged worthy of empire; and the tediousness of a painful illness rendered him at last peevish and cruel. "On the frontier," says Milman, "at the head of the army, he put on the hardihood and simplicity of a soldier; disdained any distinction either of fare or of comfort from the meanest legionary, and marched on foot through the most inclement seasons. In the peaceful and voluptuous cities of the South, he became the careless and luxurious Epicurean. Hadrian treated the established religion with the utmost respect: he officiated with solemn dignity as supreme Pontiff, and at

* "In a short time," says Lingard, "the state of Britain had become so precarious, as to require the presence of the Emperor Hadrian. Of his exploits, history is silent; but on the testimony of medals and inscriptions, we may believe that he expelled the barbarians, and recovered the provinces which had been lost. If, however, his victories have been forgotten, his memory has been preserved by a military work, which was executed under his direction, and has hitherto defied the ravages of time. Convinced by experience, that the *prætentura* thrown up by Agricola could not confine the northern tribes, he resolved to oppose a second barrier to their incursions, by drawing a ditch and rampart across the island from the Solway Frith on the western, to the mouth of the Tyne on the eastern, coast. This mighty fortification measured in length more than sixty of our miles; and strong bodies of troops were permanently stationed at short intervals on the whole extent of the line." (History of England, vol. i., p. 37, 12mo. edit. London, 1837.)

† Milman's History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 152.

‡ Gibbon's Decline and Fall, vol. i., p. 131, Milman's edit., 8vo.

Rome affected disdain or aversion for foreign religions. But his mind was essentially imbued with a philosophic spirit: * he was tempted by every abstruse research, and every forbidden inquiry had irresistible attraction for his curious and busy temper. At Athens he was in turn the simple and rational philosopher, the restorer of Jupiter Olympius, and the awe-struck worshipper in the Eleusinian mysteries.† In the East, he aspired to penetrate the recondite secrets of magic, and professed himself an adept in judicial astrology. In the midst of all this tampering with foreign religions, he at once honoured and outraged the prevailing creed by the deification of Antinous, in whose honour quinquennial games were established at Mantinea; a city built, and a temple, with an endowment for a priesthood, founded and called by his name, in Egypt: ‡ his statues assumed the symbols of various deities. Acts like these, at this critical period, must have tended to alienate a large portion of the thinking class, already wavering in their cold and doubtful polytheism, to any purer or more ennobling system of religion. §

The new Emperor was not likely to entertain very favourable sentiments towards his Jewish subjects. He had been an eye-witness of the horrible scenes which had desolated the island of Cyprus; he had seen the Idalian groves reeking with blood, or unwholesome with the recent carnage of their inhabitants, and the gay and splendid cities reduced to the gloomy solitude of the grave. It is not improbable that the same mischiefs might be brooding in Palestine, and that the turbulent disposition of the Jew was one of the reasons why Hadrian, after having visited Antioch and Phœnicia, travelled into Judea. The Jews submitted very reluctantly to the sway of the conqueror; they were only kept down by a strong military force; and the Emperor constantly treated them as a vanquished people. Many were openly sold as slaves. An edict was issued tantamount to the total suppression of Judaism: the Jews were forbidden to circumcise their children; while the reading of the law, and the observance of the Sabbath, were interdicted; and, as if to insult them in their subjection, rather than to strengthen his power against them, he erected a town, with buildings after the Roman fashion, on the ancient site of Jerusalem. It is generally stated that Ælia Capitolina was built several years later, when Hadrian had suppressed the more formidable revolt of the Jews under Barcochebas. The town, however, was then newly built and colonized, and the name of Ælia substituted for that of Jerusalem; but it is satisfactorily proved, that the erection of heathen buildings on the sacred site was the cause, rather than the consequence, of that revolt. Though amidst the

* "Les autres sentiments de ce prince sont très difficiles à connaître. Il n'embrassa aucun secte, et ne fut ni Académicien, ni Stoicien, encore moins Epicurien; il parut constamment livré à cette incertitude d'opinions, fruit de la bizarrerie de son caractère, et d'un savoir superficiel ou mal digéré." (M. St. Croix.)

† The Apology of Quadratus was presented on Hadrian's visit to Athens, when he was initiated in the mysteries; that of Aristides, when he became Epoptes, A.D. 131. Warburton connects the hostility of the celebrators of the mysteries to Christianity with the Apology of Quadratus, and quotes a passage from Jerome to this effect.

‡ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. iv., cap. 8.

§ Milman's History of Christianity, p. 153.

ruins there dwelt a respectable population of Jewish and Christian inhabitants, Jerusalem had not become a place of any considerable importance since its complete destruction by Titus. It was utterly destitute of walls and fortifications, and no attempt had been made to restore the temple, or any of the public buildings. Hadrian erected a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus on the very site of the national sanctuary, and the inhabitants whom he introduced were almost entirely Greeks and Romans. This was a wanton insult on the part of the Emperor, which plainly announced his intention to annihilate at once all the hopes of the Jews as to the restoration of the holy city. A town had probably risen by degrees out of the ruins; but the formal establishment of a colony implied the perpetual alienation of the soil, and its surrender to the stranger. The Israelite looked on with dismay and with anguish, mingled with thoughts of revenge and deliverance. It was an idea firmly rooted in the heart of the faithful sons of Abraham, that, in the darkest hour of tribulation and woe, when his children were at the extremity of degradation and wretchedness, then the arm of the Lord would be revealed, and the anticipated Messiah make his long-expected appearance. The Jews imagined that lower in the scale of misery they could not fall: their race was well-nigh extinct; their city was not merely a heap of unsightly ruins, but the Pagans were about to make their permanent residence on the hill of Zion, and to cause a Gentile idol to usurp the place of the holy of holies. They anxiously, and in hope, waited for the signal of revolt.

In the meantime, when measures of severity were adopted toward the Jews, the Christians were not likely altogether to escape. There is some reason to imagine that the Church at Jerusalem was exposed, during this period, to considerable persecution. The succession of Bishops was extremely rapid, and might naturally lead to the conclusion, that their deaths had been hastened by some calamity: Justus succeeded Symeon in 107, and he appears himself to have been succeeded by Zacchæus in 112. Between that year, and 125, which is a period of only thirteen years, Eusebius mentions five other Bishops, whose names were Tobias, Benjamin, John, Matthias, and Philip, which forms a singular contrast with the thirty years in which the see was occupied by James, and the forty-five years in which it was filled by Symeon. The Christians would indeed be likely to suffer more than the Jews if the common test of loyalty were pressed with stringency and vigour, and they were required to offer sacrifice and homage to an effigy of the Emperor. No Jew could listen to this mandate without abhorrence; and if converted to Christianity, his scruples would become more refined and strong. From Jerusalem the Emperor proceeded to Alexandria, where again he would be convinced of the necessity of keeping the Jews in a state of servile subjection. The late contest with this nation commenced in Africa, and in no place was it so violently prosecuted as in Alexandria. The struggle had reduced the greater part of the city to ruins. The Christian community suffered, not merely from without, but also from internal foes. The immediate successor of Simon Magus was

Menander, who was doubtless in existence previous to the death of John, and flourished during the reigns of Domitian and Trajan. He made a great impression upon the people by his magical skill, and even persuaded many of his followers that they should not "see death." The monarch of the grave was, however, too powerful for him, and he left two successors, Basilides * and Saturninus; the former of whom distinguished himself in Alexandria, and the latter in Antioch. Basilides rose to much greater eminence than Saturninus: he gathered around him a much greater party, and his theories in religion were far more extravagant. He is charged with denying the necessity of martyrdom, and with allowing his followers to escape it by partaking of meats which had been offered to idols. The leading feature of his theology was to acknowledge the divinity of Christ, but not of Jesus. Christ, who was an emanation from God, was said to become united with Jesus at his baptism; but that he neither became incarnate at his birth, nor expired with him on the cross. This doctrine, therefore, though it confirms in a remarkable manner the pre-existence and divinity of Christ, entirely destroyed the notion of his atonement. Jesus Christ was merely a Preacher of righteousness, sent into the world to reveal the knowledge of the true God, and to free mankind from the tyranny of the evil principle.† Here we have a clue to the whole mystery of Gnosticism, and the various modifications of it, as taught in this century by Basilides, Cerdon, Marcion, and Valentinus: it consisted in the number and arrangement of successive emanations which were supposed to proceed from the First Cause. The name of Basilides, more than that of any of the Gnostics, has been connected with the use of magical charms and incantations. He believed in the doctrine of metempsychosis, which he had probably imbibed in the Platonic schools of Alexandria. He has also been charged with maintaining an indifference to human actions; a principle which Carpocrates, and other Gnostics, unquestionably entertained: it is also stated, that there were several Basilidians in Alexandria, who indulged without restraint in the grossest impurities. The laxity of manners which was thus countenanced among his followers, became fearfully detrimental to the prosperity and good repute of the Christian cause, and would not escape the notice of a mind so inquiring as that of Hadrian, who was by no means blind to the ultimate bearing of the religion of the Saviour on the social condition of the empire.

We have no means of ascertaining how long Hadrian continued in Alexandria, or whether he returned to Rome in the following year. He was in his capital in 121, when he celebrated the Quinquennalia, or fifth anniversary of his accession to the empire; on which occasion the feast called Palilia,‡ in honour of the foundation of Rome,

* See Some Account of the Writings and Opinions of Clement of Alexandria, by John, Bishop of Lincoln, p. 263, *et seq.*, 8vo. London, 1835.

† Burton's Lectures on the Eccles. Hist. of the first three Centuries, lect. xv.

‡ Palilia, a festival celebrated at Rome every year on the 21st of April, in honour of Pales, the tutelary divinity of shepherds. Some of the ancient writers called this festival "Parilia," deriving the name from *Pario*, because sacrifices were offered on that day *pro partu pecoris*. The 21st of April was the day on which, according to the

was observed with particular splendour, and the Emperor dedicated a temple to the Fortune of the city. These festivals were generally fatal to the Christians; and there is strong proof that they were at this time exposed to persecution which, for a period at least, was severe and dreadful. The martyrdom of Symphorosa and her sons, which seems to rest on credible authority, is supposed by most writers to have taken place at this crisis. Symphorosa was the wife of Getulius,* an officer in the Roman army under Trajan and Hadrian; but upon his conversion to the faith, he relinquished his commission, and retired into the country of the Sabines. His brother Amantius was equally zealous for the truth with himself, but retained his station of Tribune of a legion in the military service of the empire. The Emperor commanded Cerealis to apprehend Getulius in the country; but that officer was won over by the influence of the two brothers to the profession of Christianity. Enraged at this intelligence, Hadrian ordered Licinius to condemn them to death, unless they promptly apostatized: by the sentence, therefore, of this individual, these three, with a fourth, named Primitivus, after suffering a painful imprisonment at Tivoli, were beheaded. Symphorosa, the wife of Getulius, was thus left with seven children, whom she resolved to educate in a way worthy of the parent from whom they had descended. She lived, therefore, in great privacy. She had not been long in her retreat, when Hadrian erected a stately palace in her neighbourhood, the ruins of which may still be seen, near Tivoli; and the dedication was accompanied, as usual, with sacrifices, and other invocations of the gods. The oracle, or rather the Priests, returned for answer, "that the deities of the empire could have no rest, so long as Symphorosa and her sons were so near them, and allowed to call daily upon their God; but that they were inclined to favour the Emperor, provided that family could be induced to sacrifice to and worship them."

This answer could not fail in having its desired effect: Hadrian, who was renowned for his piety towards the heathen deities, and alarmed at the answer which had been returned to his invocations, commanded this pious woman and her sons to be seized, and brought before him. She approached with joy on her countenance, praying for herself and her children, that the Most High would grant to her and

early traditions of Rome, Romulus had commenced the building of the city, so that the festival was at the same time solemnized as the *dies natalitius* of Rome; and some of the rites customary in later times, were said to have been first performed by Romulus when he fixed *pomœrium*. Ovid gives a description of the rites of the Palilia, which clearly shows that he regarded it as a shepherd festival, such as it must originally have been when the Romans were real shepherds and husbandmen, and as it must have continued to be among country people in his own time, as is expressly stated by Dionysius; for in the city itself it must have lost its original character, and have been regarded only as the *dies natalitius*. The connexion, however, between these two characters of the festival is manifest, as the founders of the city were, as it were, the Kings of shepherds, and the founders of a religion suited to shepherds. (Dict. of Greek and Roman Antiquities.)

* "This Getulus or Getulius," says Foxe, "was a Minister or teacher (as witness the Martyrology and Chronicle of Ado) in the city of Tibur; which Getulus, with Cerialis, Amantius, and Primitivus, by the commandment of Hadrian, were condemned to the fire; wherein they were martyred, and put to death." (Vol. i., p. 120. 8vo. edit.)

to them grace to confess his name with constancy. At first, the Emperor endeavoured by persuasion to induce her to comply with his demands; to which she replied, "My husband Getulius, and his brother Amantius, being your Tribunes, suffered divers torments for the name of Jesus Christ, rather than sacrifice to idols; and they have vanquished your demons by their death, choosing to be beheaded, rather than to be overcome. The death they suffered drew upon them ignominy among men, but glory among the angels; and they now enjoy eternal life in heaven, and I am ready to follow their example." The Emperor, changing his voice, said to her, in an angry tone, "Either sacrifice to the most powerful gods, with thy sons, or thou thyself shalt be offered, with thy children, to them, to appease their incensed powers." To which Symphorosa heroically answered, "Your deities cannot receive such a sacrifice, and should you slay me for the sake of Christ my God, those demons whom you adore will be the more miserably tormented. But can I hope for so great a happiness as to be offered, with my children, a sacrifice to the Most High?" This reply incensed the tyrant still more, and he immediately ordered her to choose her death, or yield to his commands; adding, "Either comply with my request, or you shall all miserably perish." To which Symphorosa said, "Do not imagine that fear will make me change: I am desirous of being at rest with my husband, whom you put to death for the name of Jesus Christ;" and, further, without hesitation, assured him, "that she desired nothing more than to be united to her husband, and to follow the path which he before had trodden." Hadrian, finding Symphorosa thus resolved, ordered her to be carried to the temple of Hercules, where she was first buffeted on the cheeks, then cruelly scourged, and afterwards hung up by the hair of her head. The tyrant, finding that these torments, and further threatenings, were unable to shake her invincible soul, gave orders that she should be thrown into the river with a great stone fastened about her neck. They were immediately executed; and her brother Eugenius, who was one of the chief of the Council of the Tiber, took up her body, and buried it on the road near that town.

On the following day, the Emperor summoned the seven sons of Symphorosa before him, to whom he appears to have been very liberal in his promises, but as violent in his threats; exhorting them forthwith to sacrifice to the gods, and not to imitate the obstinacy of their mother. Finding them proof against all he had to say, he gave directions for seven posts to be planted around the temple of Hercules, to which pulleys and ropes were to be adjusted; upon each one of the pious youths was to be bound, and their limbs stretched until they were dislocated. The young men, far from yielding under the violence of their tortures, were encouraged by each other's example, and appeared more eager to suffer, than the executioners were to inflict, pain. At length Hadrian, finding all his efforts unavailing to lead them to alter their resolution, commanded them individually to be slain, and each in a different manner. The throat of Crescentius, the eldest, was cut; Julian, the second, was stabbed in the breast;

Nemesius, the third, was pierced with a lance through the heart; Primitivus, the fourth, was wounded in the belly; Justin, the fifth, received his death-wound in the back; Stacteus, the sixth, in the side; and Eugenius, the youngest, was cleft asunder, from his head downwards. Hadrian is said to have visited the heathen temple the day after this tragical event, and to have given orders for the bodies of these noble martyrs to be interred in one common grave. For a short period only the persecution ceased; and we are told, that during this interval of peace, the Christians exhumed these sufferers, and buried them with honour, midway between Tivoli and Rome.

In a few months, EUSTACHIUS, a Roman Captain, was called to bear his testimony to the truth, by martyrdom. He had been sent by Hadrian on some important expedition, which he had accomplished with great success; and the Emperor, in order to express his gratitude to his officer, met him on his return to the capital, and desired him to sacrifice to Apollo, for having obtained the victory. The hero promptly refused, and would, neither by persuasion nor threat, be induced to comply. He was taken into custody, and conveyed to Rome, where, together with his wife Theopista, and his two sons Agapetus and Theopistus, he was condemned to death. With Eustachius, we enumerate, among those who "loved not their lives unto the death," FAUSTINUS and JOVITA, brothers, nobly born, and zealous professors of the Christian faith, which they preached without fear in their native city of Brescia, whilst the Bishop of that place lay concealed during the persecution. The ardour with which they endeavoured to propagate the truth, excited the animosity of the Heathen, and procured for them a severe, though glorious, death. Julian, a heathen noble, apprehended them; and the Emperor passing through Brescia at the time, they were brought before him, who condemned them to suffer, provided they refused to abandon the Christian profession. Torture of the most aggravated character was inflicted upon them; but, it not producing the effect which was expected, they were beheaded. An individual beholding the constancy which they displayed, and the wonderful patience with which they endured the trial, concluded that they were favoured with supernatural and divine power, and, to the astonishment of the spectators, cried out, "Great is the God of the Christians!" This involuntary speech was fatal to him who uttered it: he was immediately seized, and condemned to partake of the same fate and honour. He was crowned with martyrdom.

Hadrian appears to have been led by curiosity, as well as by motives of policy, to visit in person the remote parts of the empire, and he travelled with considerable rapidity. He traversed Gaul and Britain, returned to Gaul, and passed the winter in Spain. In his progress, he was met by Italicus, the Governor of Rhætia, who complaining on account of the obstinacy of the Christians in refusing to sacrifice to the gods, Hadrian ordered, that if they continued to refuse, they should invariably be put to death. Hence the martyrdom of Faustinus and Jovita at Brescia. There is every reason to believe,

that many Christians suffered in the cause of truth while the Emperor was passing through that country. Some of them are said to have suffered at Milan; and others to have been sent to Rome, where they would not fail to observe traces of the persecution which had lately harassed the church in that city. It was, doubtless, beginning to subside; but Xystus, the Bishop of Rome, and some of his flock, were still concealing themselves in the catacombs: and, whatever we may think of the martyrdoms in the north of Italy, there is evidence that these excavations in the neighbourhood of Rome were used as hiding-places by the early Christians. The Papal Church has preserved many marvellous and incredible particulars concerning these catacombs;* and, although it is not necessary to believe that all the bones, which had been found in them, are Christian relics, the places are open for inspection, and afford indisputable evidence, that they were used for ordinances of religion, as well as for concealment. These vaults commence under the church of St. Sebastian, and extend a considerable way; some assert as far as Ostia, a distance of about sixteen miles. This, and many other stories told of these catacombs, throw an air of suspicion over their history, and make us inclined to disbelieve the traditions concerning them. When it is asserted that fourteen Popes, and one hundred and seventy thousand Christian martyrs, were buried here, we may reasonably ask, How were the numbers ascertained with such accuracy? But this should not make us doubt the story altogether, of the Christians having first retired into these caves as a place of refuge, and having subsequently used them as cemeteries. The origin of the catacombs at Rome and at Naples was, most probably, the same† with those at Paris, which

* These subterranean works first attracted general notice during the time of Augustus, when their extent rendered them dangerous. They then obtained celebrity as the scene of a domestic tragedy, referred to by Cicero in his oration for Cluentius. The riches of Asinius, a young Roman citizen, had excited the avarice of Oppianicus, who employed an accomplice to personate Asinius, and to execute a will in his name. The pretended Asinius having bequeathed the property to Oppianicus, and obtained the signatures of some strangers, the true Asinius was inveigled to the gardens of the Esquiline, and precipitated into one of the sand-pits. (In arenarias quasdam extra Portam Esquilinam.) It was in similar caverns that Nero was afterwards advised to conceal himself, when terrified by the sentence of an enraged Senate: on which occasion he made answer to his freedman Phaon, that he would not go under-ground while living. The circumstance is related by Suetonius. (Maitland's Church in the Catacombs, p. 17.)

† To the Italian traveller, and to those especially who have examined the ruins of ancient Rome, or visited the classic shores of Naples, and its enchanting environs, the fame of the ancient cement, made from a ferruginous sand of volcanic production, called *pozzolana*, must be well known. Not only the site of Rome itself, but the whole of the circumjacent campagna abounds in *pozzolana*, and in a light hard substance, called by the Italians, *tufo*. To procure these materials on the spot, or at the least possible distance, for the construction of their gigantic edifices; and, at the same time, not to break up and spoil the surface of the ground, but to reserve it for building, or for ornamental cultivation, the Romans opened excavations in a way very much resembling our mode of working coal-mines in England. They sank shafts of some depth, whence they extracted the *pozzolana*, and the *tufo*. Many of these shafts still remain unclosed and visible in various parts of the ground, in the more immediate neighbourhood of Rome; nor have they escaped the notice of ancient writers. The ancients selected and exhausted the most copious veins, or rather *strata*, of the sand, which they wrought in such a manner, that the excavation, by the number of its wide and narrow galleries and passages, which sometimes diverged from, and at other times intersected, one another, very much resembled a subterranean city, with its streets and alleys; and still recalls to our

were undoubtedly excavations for the purpose of procuring stone. The material at Rome is much softer than the free-stone of Paris, and supplied the ancient Romans with the earth called *pozzolana*. This, which is so abundantly diffused over the neighbourhood of Rome, is generally said to be of volcanic origin, and is used very largely for making cement. It was known to the ancients, and was called *pulvis Puteolanus*, from the circumstance of its being found in great quantities near Puteoli. Vitruvius mentions it; and it seems to be his opinion, as it is that of the moderns, that the same cause which produces volcanoes, is instrumental in forming this earth." *

There appears to be evidence enough, that these subterraneous excavations were used by the Christians, in which to hide themselves from their persecutors. Eusebius, speaking of the troubles in Egypt, represents the Governor Æmilianus as saying, "Neither you, nor any others, shall in any wise be permitted, either to hold conventions, or to enter what you call your cemeteries." † He mentions, also, the same prohibition as being enforced by Maximinus.‡ Fabian ordered several buildings to be constructed in the cemeteries; and from Cyprian we learn that Sextus and Quartus suffered martyrdom in them.§ The Christians appear never to have adopted the Roman custom of burning the dead. Macrobius says, that in his time, at the end of the fourth century, the custom of burning the dead was entirely left off; and as burial within the walls was prohibited, they naturally had recourse to those places which had served as a retreat and refuge for the living. Jerome has left us a lively picture of their state during the early part of his life-time, that is, about the middle of the fourth century. "When I was at Rome," says the Monk of Palestine, "still a youth, and employed in literary pursuits, I was accustomed, in company with others of my own age, and actuated by the same feelings, to visit on Sundays the sepulchres of the Apostles

remembrance what ancient authors have written, and modern travellers have verified, concerning the appearance of the Cretan and other classic labyrinths. That these subterranean corridors were commenced by the ancient Romans, and the greater part of them the work of that people anterior to the preaching of the Gospel, is certain; though it is equally well attested, that they were arranged, enlarged, and rendered available to the several purposes of sepulture, of religious worship, and of occasional residence, by the persecuted Christians. (Rock's Hierurgia, p. 797. See also Lumisden's Remarks on the Antiquities of Rome, 4to., p. 96; De Urbis ac Romani olim Imperii Splendore, Opus Eruditionibus, Historiis, ac Animadversionibus, tam sacris quam profanis, illustratum, Auctore Joanne Baptista Casalio, Romano, Romæ Anno Jubilei, cap. xv., p. 56, fol., 1650; Sketches of the Institutions and Domestic Manners of the Romans, second edition, 12mo., p. 397; Roman Antiquities, or an Account of the Manners and Customs of the Romans, by Alexander Adam, LL. D., seventh edition, 12mo., p. 408, *et seq.*; Itinerario Instruttivo di Roma Antica e Moderna, ovvero Descrizione Generale Dei Monumenti, &c., e delle sue Adiacenze, di Mariano, Vasi, tom. ii., p. 270, Roma, 1812; Burton's Description of the Antiquities of Rome, 8vo. edit., p. 480, 1821.

* Burton's Description of the Antiquities and other Curiosities of Rome. 8vo. Edit. p. 480. London, 1821.

† Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 11. The Christians called their burial-places cemeteries, κοιμητηρια, "dormitories," because death in the light of the Gospel is a "sleep." Well may Christianity be pronounced the only true philosophy, when she arrays our greatest terrors in such a light!

‡ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. ix., cap. 2.

§ Cypriani Opera, Epist. lxxxi. Ad Successum.

and martyrs; and often to go down into the crypts dug in the heart of the earth, where the walls on either side are lined with the dead; and so intense is the darkness, that we almost realize the words of the Prophet, 'They go down alive into hell;' and here and there a scanty aperture, ill-deserving the name of window, admits scarcely light enough to mitigate the gloom which reigns below: and as we advance through the shades with cautious steps, we are forcibly reminded of the words of Virgil, 'Horror on all sides; even the silence terrifies the mind.'" *

Dr. Maitland, in his interesting work, entitled, "The Church in the Catacombs," has proved, by historical evidence, that these excavations were originally dug by the Pagans as sand-pits or quarries; and then proceeds to show the manner in which the Christians became connected with them.† The *arenarii*, or "sand-diggers," were persons of the lowest grade; and, from the nature of their occupation, probably formed a distinct class. There is reason to suppose, that Christianity spread very early among them: for in time of persecution, the converts employed in the subterranean passages, not only took refuge there themselves, but also put the whole church in possession of these, otherwise inaccessible, retreats. When we reflect upon the trials which awaited the church, and the combined powers of earth and hell, which menaced its earliest years, it is impossible not to recognise the fostering care of a heavenly hand in thus providing a cradle for the infant community. Perhaps to the protection afforded by the catacombs, as an impregnable fortress from which persecution always failed to dislodge, the church in Rome owed much of the rapidity of its triumph, and the preservation of its sanctuaries. "It appears," he further observes, "from a number of testimonies, not, perhaps, of any great value individually, though of some weight when combined, that the early confessors were at times sentenced to work in the sand-pits. This species of punishment is referred to in many Acts of the Martyrs, and especially in those of Marcellus,

* Hieron., Comment. in Ezekiel., cap. xl. Opera, tom. iii., col. 980. Ed. Benedict. Fol., Paris, 1699.

† From various reasons, the caves near the present Basilica of St. Sebastian, are considered by antiquarians as having been the first occupied by the Christians. To these, in particular, were applied the expressions, *ad arenas*, *cryptæ arenariæ*, and *cryptæ*; to which the Christians added the Greek form, *ad catacumbas*. The term "catacombs," therefore, signified originally, the pits about that part of the Appian Way; and we find the phrases *in catacumbas*, of the seventh century; and *juxta catacumbas* of the thirteenth, limited to a space extending from the church of St. Sebastian, to the circus of Romulus, and the tomb of Cecilia Metella. Anastasius, in the Liber Pontificalis, must have used the words *in cemeterio catacumbarum*, to designate this particular spot, as some manuscripts read, *in cemeterio Callisti*. Lastly, the phrase, *locus qui dicitur catacumbas*, is used by Gregory, in the thirtieth Epistle of the fourth book, as indicating a spot two miles distant from Rome, that is, the Sebastian catacombs. To sum up the history of the word, which, though of Greek form, claims no early origin, it is nowhere found in inscriptions belonging to the ancient cemeteries; nor does it occur in history before the time of Gregory the Great, in the sixth century, from which to the thirteenth, it generally signified a part of the country near Rome. Still later it was applied, in a limited sense, to a chapel underneath the Basilica of St. Sebastian, as observed by Raoul Rochette; and, in our own times, it has become a generic term for all subterranean passages of a certain length and tortuosity, whether they lie beneath the pyramids of the desert, or undermine the site of a modern metropolis. (Maitland's Church in the Catacombs.)

where we are told, that the Emperor Maximian 'condemned all the Roman soldiers who were Christians, to hard labour; and in various places set them to work, some to dig stones, others sand.' He also ordered Ciriacus and Sisinnus to be strictly guarded, condemning them to dig sand, and to carry it on their shoulders. Marius and his companions were sentenced to the same employment. There is, also, a tradition in Rome, that the baths of Diocletian were built from the materials procured by the Christians." The objections which have been raised to the catacombs having been employed as a place of refuge from persecution, founded upon the narrowness of the passages, the difficulty of supporting life, and the risk of discovery, scarcely apply to a temporary residence underground in times of danger. Under other circumstances, we have reason to believe the catacombs were not employed. "In the excavations at Quesnel, not only persons, but cattle, contrived to support existence; added to which, we have the direct testimony of several writers. Had the intricacies of the catacombs been well known to the heathen authorities, or the entrances limited in number to two or three, they would, doubtless, have afforded an insecure asylum. But the entrances were numberless, scattered over the campagna for miles; and the labyrinths below so occupied by the Christians, and so blocked up in various places by them, that pursuit must have been almost useless. The Acts of the Martyrs relate some attempts made to overwhelm the galleries with mounds of earth, in order to destroy those who were concealed within; but, setting aside these legends, we are credibly informed, that not only did the Christians take refuge there, they were also occasionally overtaken by their pursuers. The catacombs have become illustrious by the actual martyrdom of some noble witnesses to the truth. Xystus, Bishop of Rome, together with Quartus, one of his clergy, suffered below ground in the time of Cyprian. Stephen the First,* another Bishop of Rome, was traced by heathen soldiers to his subterranean chapel: on the conclusion of divine service, he was thrust back into his episcopal chair, and beheaded. The letters of Christians then living, refer to such scenes with a simplicity that dispels all idea of exaggeration; while their expectation of sharing the same fate affords a vivid picture of those dreadful times. Chrysostom, who lived not long after the days of persecution, alludes to the concealment of a lady of rank below ground. In an indignant remonstrance against the festivities held over the graves

* An authentic history of Stephen, during his long residence in the catacombs, would be surpassed in interest by few narratives in the ecclesiastical archives. Some instances have been handed down to us. From time to time he was consulted by his Clergy, who resorted to him for advice and exhortation. On one occasion, a layman named Hippolytus, himself a refugee, sought the Bishop's cell to receive instruction regarding a circumstance that preyed upon his mind. Paulina, his heathen sister, together with her husband Adrian, were in the habit of sending provisions by their two children to Hippolytus, and his companions. The unconverted state of these relations, by whom his bodily life was supported, weighed heavily upon him, and, by the advice of Stephen, a plan was laid for detaining the children, so that the parents were forced to seek them in the cavern. Every argument was used by Stephen and Hippolytus to induce their benefactors to embrace the faith, and though for the time ineffectual, the desired end was at length accomplished. Tradition adds, that they all suffered martyrdom, and were buried in the catacombs. (Maitland's Church in the Catacombs.)

of martyrs in his dissipated city, he compares with the luxurious revels into which the agapæ had degenerated, the actual condition of those whose sufferings were celebrated in so unbefitting a manner. 'What connexion,' he asks, 'is there between your feasts, and the hardships of a lady unaccustomed to privations, trembling in a vault, apprehensive of the capture of her maid, upon whom she depends for her daily food?' These circumstances prove sufficiently the general habit of taking refuge in the cemeteries on any sudden emergency; and it is not difficult to understand how the concealment became practicable. On the outbreak of a persecution, the Elders of a church, heads of families, and others particularly obnoxious to the Pagans, would be the first to suffer; perhaps, the only individuals whose death or exile was intended by the imperial officers. Aware of their danger, and, probably, well versed in the signs of impending persecution, they might easily betake themselves to the catacombs, where they could be supported by those whose obscure condition left them at liberty."*

The accounts which are extant of Hadrian's travels for the next three years, throw but little light upon the history of the church. He traversed nearly the whole of Asia Minor, visited Egypt, and, probably, Judea. In all these countries he, doubtless, witnessed many superstitions, especially in Egypt; and he was a close observer of these peculiarities. He spent a considerable time in Greece; and in the year 125, he again visited Athens, when he was initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries: during the whole of this period, there is reason to believe that the Christians were exposed to great persecution. The individual whom we meet with as the successor of Dionysius the Areopagite, is supposed to have been Publius, who is said to have suffered martyrdom,† and to have been succeeded by Quadratus. There is, however, positive evidence that the church suffered great molestation during the visit of Hadrian; and that Quadratus embraced the opportunity of presenting‡ to the Emperor a defence of Christianity. Aristides,§ also, another Christian of Athens, and a philosopher, composed a similar work about the same period, which he dedicated to Hadrian; and we may suppose that, from these two works, the Emperor would form a different notion of Christianity

* Maitland, The Church in the Catacombs, a Description of the Primitive Church of Rome, illustrated by its Sepulchral Remains, p. 30. 8vo. London, 1846.

† The date of the death of Publius is uncertain: some place it at the time of Hadrian's visit to Athens, and others much later, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. Some ascribe to this event a much earlier date. Le Sueur placed it A.D. 113. "Nous avons dit en l'an 91, qu'à la place de Denis l'Aréopagite Publius fut établé Evêque de l'Eglise, d'Athénes. Il y exerca dignement sa charge jusqu'à cette année, où la persécution etant redoublée, il souffrit constamment le martire pour la foi qu'il avoit enseignée." (Le Sueur Histoire de l'Eglise, et de l'Empire, tom. i., p. 222.

‡ It is nowhere expressly stated, that the Apology was put into the hands of the Emperor by the author, or read in his presence. Jortin remarks, that προσφωνειν means to "dedicate a book," which may be done without presenting it in person. At the same time, from the character of the work, and from the interest excited respecting the subject, he is disposed to think the book was certainly known to the Emperor.

§ "Aristides, also, a man faithfully devoted to the religion we profess, like Quadratus, has left to posterity a defence of the faith addressed to Hadrian." (Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. iv., cap. 3. See also Hieron., Liber De Viris Illustribus, cap. xx.)

from that which he had collected from its interested enemies. Both these Apologies are lost, although Eusebius has preserved a small fragment of that of Quadratus; from which we learn, that the writer had seen persons who had been miraculously cured by our Saviour; or, at least, that some of these persons had lived to what might be called his own times.* These appear to have been the first of those interesting works, which, under the name of Apologies,† or defences, were addressed by the more learned of the Christians to their heathen Governors. Although Hadrian does not seem to have repelled the respectful homage of these apologists, persecution was still indulged, and the clamour of the people was recognised as the language of the imperial throne. In many of the Asiatic cities, the apparently sullen and unsocial absence of the Christians from the public assemblies, from the games, and from other popular exhibitions, provoked, or, at least, gave occasion for the latent animosity to break out against them. A general acclamation frequently demanded their martyrdom. "The Christians to the lions!" was again the general outcry; and the names of the most prominent or obnoxious of the community would be denounced, with the same sudden and uncontrollable hostility. A weak or superstitious Magistrate trembled before the tumultuous cry, and generally became the willing and obsequious instrument of the popular fury. It was an established privilege of the Roman people, of the exercise of which innumerable instances are to be found in the Roman history, that, whenever the commonalty were assembled at the exhibition of public games, whether it were in the city or in the provinces, they might demand what they pleased of the Emperors or the Presidents; and their demands, thus made, must be complied with. When the multitude, therefore, collected together at the public games, united in one general clamour for the punishment of the Christians at large, or of certain individuals belonging to that sect, the Presidents, as before stated, had no alternative but to comply with their demand, and sacrifice, at least, several innocent victims to their fury. The heathen priesthood availed themselves of this custom, in order to evade the rescript of Trajan. Finding that few individuals could be induced to take upon themselves the unthankful and perilous office of accuser, they made it their business, on every favourable occasion, to excite the lower orders of the people to join in one disorderly clamour. To general and public accusations of this kind, no degree of hazard was attached; whilst, on the other hand, it was a thing of no ordinary danger amongst the Romans to turn a deaf ear to them, or treat them with disrespect.‡ Under the reign

* "The deeds of our Saviour were always before you, for they were true miracles; those that were healed, those that were raised from the dead, who were seen, not only when healed, and when raised, but were always present. They remained living a long time, not only whilst our Lord was upon earth, but likewise when he had left the earth: so that some of them have also lived to our own times." Such was Quadratus. (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. iv., cap. 3.)

† The word *απολογια*, which we translate "answer," signifies a defence: from this we have our word "apology," which did not originally signify an excuse for an act, but a defence of that act. The defences of Christianity, by the primitive fathers, are called Apologies. (Dr. A. Clarke.)

‡ Mosheim's Commentaries, vol. ii., pp. 52—54.

of Hadrian, it was comparatively easy for the heathen priesthood to lead the multitude to unite in one universal cry for the destruction of the Christians; for, as Eusebius records, the Gnostic sects, which seem to have been made up in part of evil-designing persons, and in part of madmen and fools, were at that time continually obtruding themselves on the attention of the world; and the crimes and infamous practices of which these were guilty, being indiscriminately imputed to the Christians in general, the public prejudice was in no small degree increased against the whole body.* "They taught that the basest deeds should be perpetrated by those that would arrive at perfection in the mysteries, or rather that would reach the extent of their abominations. So that, as they were accustomed to speak, one could in no other way escape the rulers of the world, unless by performing his part of obscenity to all. By the aid of such coadjutors, it happened that the spirit of wickedness enslaved those that were led astray by them to their own destruction; whilst to the unbelieving Gentiles they afforded abundant scope to slander the truth of God; as the report proceeding from them extended, with its infamy, to the whole body of Christians. In this way it happened, therefore, for the most part, that a certain impious and most absurd superstition was spread abroad among the unbelievers respecting us, as of those who had unlawful commerce with mothers and sisters, and made use of execrable food. These artifices, however, did not continue to advance far, as the truth nevertheless established itself, and in process of time shed abroad its own light more and more. Indeed, the machinations of its enemies were almost immediately extinguished by the power of truth; one sect rising after another, the first always passing away, and one in one way, and another in another, evaporating into speculations of many modes, and as many forms." †

In the mean time, persecution against the Christian church was prosecuted with animosity and vigour, as recorded in the history of Serapia and Sabina. The former was a native of Antioch, in Syria, where she had been educated in the principles of the Christian faith. When young, she visited Italy, and providentially became acquainted with Sabina, a widow lady, the relict of an officer of some distinction in the army of Vespasian. Serapia, by her judicious and godly conversation and example, so influenced the mind of Sabina, that she embraced the truth, and subsequently, with her preceptress, retired to a small town called Vendina, where they lived, employing their time in acts of devotion and charity, until the persecution which occurred in the reign of Hadrian, after he had been initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries. Berillus, the Governor of that part of the country, knowing that Sabina and the whole of her family were Christians, commanded them to be brought before him. Sabina, on receiving the summons, sent an apology, and desired to be excused; declaring, at the same time, that not one of her family should have her consent to leave the house. Serapia, apprehending what might be the consequences of

* Mosheim's Commentaries, vol. ii., p. 54.
† Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. iv., cap. 7.

exasperating the Magistrate, desired that she might be permitted to appear alone, hoping that the Most High would not forsake her in this her hour of trial. Sabina, sensible of the danger to which such an act would expose her, endeavoured to dissuade her from it; but, finding she could not prevail, she resolved to accompany her. When they appeared before Berillus, he manifested too great respect for the rank and station of Sabina to treat her with rudeness; and therefore, with apparent concern, informed her that he was surprised that a lady of her character and station should so far degrade herself as to embrace Christianity at the suggestion of a vile witch,—a term which he unceremoniously applied to Serapia. To this Sabina promptly replied, that she heartily wished she could see him in the power of that *witch*, who would teach him to renounce idolatry, and acknowledge the only true God. The Governor, after further remonstrating, permitted them to return home.

Three days after, Berillus sent his officers to seize Serapia, and bring her before him. Sabina, alarmed, accompanied her, and employed various entreaties in her favour; but finding the Magistrate deaf to all that she urged, she returned to her house overwhelmed with anxiety and sorrow. The Judge forthwith proceeded to inform Serapia, that she must sacrifice to the gods of the empire. She replied, that her religion would not allow her to adore such false divinities; that she worshipped God in her heart; and that her body, as long as she kept that pure and undefiled, was the temple of the living God, who dwelleth not in temples made with hands, but in the hearts of the faithful and undefiled. Upon this, Berillus asked whether, if her body were violated, it would cease to be the temple of her God. To which she answered in the affirmative; and, at the same time, denounced a curse against any who might attempt such violation. The Governor, in no degree affected by these threats, ordered her to be conveyed to a common brothel, and surrendered into the hands of two miscreants, who were ordered to use her as they thought fit. But, earnestly calling upon God, Serapia obtained deliverance; for we are told, that when these wretches entered the apartment, they fell into a swoon, from which they did not recover until all around were convinced that her prayer was heard. The Heathens imputed her deliverance to her magical powers; and the Governor forthwith, with considerable gravity, required the sufferer to disclose her art. To which she declared, that she detested all such charms, inasmuch as they proceeded from the devil; but that her trust was in the living God. Berillus then renewed his solicitations that she should sacrifice to the pagan deities; suggesting to her, in terms not to be misunderstood, that if she refused, her life should pay the penalty of her disobedience. Her reply was, that she would never adore demons; when the Governor directed a flaming torch to be applied to her side,—repeating, at the same time, his assurance that nothing but compliance with his commands should save her life. She was invincible. Finding, therefore, that he could prevail nothing, and that she was steadfast in the faith, he delivered her to the executioners, by whom she was cruelly scourged and tortured, and ultimately

beheaded. Sabina took care of her remains, providing for them a decent interment.

It was not long before Sabina was subjected to a similar ordeal. Berillus, from respect to her person and station, hesitated to proceed against her; but Elpidius, by whom he was either succeeded in his office, or who held jurisdiction independent of him, did not prove so generous and mild. By his mandate she was apprehended, and treated far beneath her rank. He inquired how she could so far forget herself as to embrace the religion of the Christians, the life of whom was no better than death. She replied, that she returned thanks to Jesus Christ her Lord, who by means of Serapia had delivered her from the power of demons.* This declaration, with others to the same effect, so enraged the Magistrate, that he swore by all the gods, if she did not immediately offer sacrifice to them, he would revenge the affront by her death. After trying various methods of persuasion and torture to induce her compliance, all of which proved ineffectual, he sentenced her to be beheaded, and her property confiscated. We are informed that she suffered on the same day as Serapia, but in the following year.†

In the midst of the cruelty and oppression which were in numerous provinces exercised towards the Christians, Serenus Granius, the Proconsul of Asia, wrote a letter to Hadrian, which is unfortunately lost; but in which he solicited instructions as to the mode of treating the Christians. He appears to have been a humane and equitable Magistrate, and utterly averse to the apparent injustice of putting the followers of Christ to death, merely to gratify the clamours of the populace, and for no actual crime. There is also too much reason to conclude that the order which was given by Trajan, in his reply to Pliny, was acted upon with a strictness and severity which were not originally contemplated. Trajan had allowed the Christians to be punished, merely as Christians. All that he required was the name

* "Serapie (Sainte), vierge et martyre en Italie, dans le second siècle, convertit, à ce que portent les actes de sa vie, une dame de la province d'Ombrie, nommée Sabine, chez laquelle elle demeuroit. Elle fut arrêtée par ordre du Juge, déclara qu'elle etoit Chrétienne, et fut condamnée à être mise dans un lieu infame, pour être abandonnée à deux Egyptiens. Dieu permit que ces deux hommes en entrant dans ce lieu fussent saisis d'un étourdissement, qui les empêcha d'attenter à la pudicité de Sérapie. Le Juge l'ayant fait venir de nouveau à son tribunal la sollicita à sacrifier aux dieux; et comme elle persista à le refuser, il lui fit donner des coups de bâton, et la condamna à avoir la tête tranchée. On tient que Sabine fut aussi condamnée à mort un an après. On fait leur mémoire au troisiéme de Septembre; et dès le cinquiéme siècle il y avoit à Rome une église qui portoit le nom de Sainte Sabine; mais les actes de ces deux saintes ne sont pas authentiques. Acta apud Mombricium et Balusium, tom. ii., Miscellanea, Le Nain de Tillemont, Mémoires pour l'Histoire Ecclesiastique, Baillet, Vies des Saintes, Moreri." Alban Butler is very chary in the account which he has given of these supposed Martyrs. (Surius De Probatis Sanctorum, Aug. 29.)

† "Adriani Imperatoris anno septimo Serapia virgo Antiochena Romam venit, et dominam suam Sabinam, viduam Valentini, patricii Romani, ad fidem Christi convertit. Ea de causa accusata apud Præsidem Berillum cùm diis sacrificare nollet, capite truncata est. Sabina verò domina ejus cùm virginis Serapiæ corpus honestæ sepulturæ mandasset, apud Præfectum Helpidium accusata, et in prætorium adducta, Christum constanter et masculo animo confessa, et in idolomaniam Ethnicam graviter invecta est. Quapropter gladio percussa est: et facultates ejus ærario publico cesserunt; ipsa verò læta, et cum invocatione nominis divini martyrium est perpessa." (Osiand., Epit. Hist. Eccles., cent. ii., lib. i., cap. 13, tom. i., quarto, p. 24. Tubing, 1592.)

of the accuser, and an admission of the fact; and nothing more was wanting to gratify the malice of the heathen Priests and their dependents. It was easy to raise the cry of the people on their side. The rabble in a Roman or Grecian city could not be better pleased, than to have a supply of victims always ready for the wild beasts in the circus. The Christians were condemned to this savage butchery; and if any public calamity had happened, the multitude was persuaded that the wrath of heaven would be appeased if the Christians were put to death.* The Magistrates who succeeded Pliny had perhaps made themselves popular by yielding to the shouts of the people, and giving up the Christians to amuse them in the amphitheatre; but Granius felt scruples in acting upon such an edict, which was so manifestly cruel and unjust.† Hadrian was in no haste to return an answer: it was addressed, not to Granius, who shortly after he had written the epistle quitted his command, but to Minutius Fundanus, his successor. The answer is preserved by Justin Martyr, which may be considered the second positive edict or rescript of an Emperor concerning the Christians, and is as follows :—

"THE LETTER OF HADRIAN THE EMPEROR, TO THE PROCONSUL MINUCIUS FUNDATUS.

"I HAVE received a letter written to me by the very illustrious Serenius Granius, your predecessor in office. The subject is one which I feel bound to inquire into, both that these people may not be vexatiously disturbed, and that base informers may not be encouraged in their vile occupation. To the matter, then: if the people of the province will appear openly to support their charges against the Christians, so as to give them opportunity of answering for themselves before the tribunal, let them keep to this alone, and not proceed by rude demands, and vain clamours; for it is much more becoming, if any one wishes to accuse, that you should take regular cognizance of the matter. If, then, any one shall accuse them, and show that they are breaking the laws, do you determine according to the degree of their offence. But if, by Hercules, the charge prove to be a calumny, do you estimate the enormity of such calumny, and take care to punish it."

* "But, on the contrary, the name of 'faction' must be applied to those who are banded together in enmity against the good and the honest, who join together their cry against the blood of the innocent; pretending, forsooth, in defence of their enmity, that vain excuse also, that they think the Christians to be the cause of every public calamity, of every national ill. If the Tiber come up to the walls, if the Nile come not up to the fields, if the heaven have stood still, if the earth hath been moved, if there be any famine, if any pestilence, 'The Christians to the lions!' is forthwith the word. Before the age of Tiberius,—that is, before the coming of Christ,—how many calamities, I pray, afflicted the world and the city? We read that Hiera, Anaphe, and the islands Delos, and Rhodes, and Cos, were, with many thousand men, utterly destroyed. Even Plato relateth that a land larger than Asia and Africa was snatched away by the Atlantic Ocean. An earthquake, moreover, hath drained the Corinthian sea; and the force of the waves hath separated Lucania from Italy, and banished it, to bear the name of Sicily. Surely these things could not happen without harm to the inhabitants. But where were, I will not say the Christians, the despisers of your gods, but your gods themselves, at that time?" (Tertull., Apologet. 40.)

† Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xvi.

There is, however, reason to believe that this edict of the Emperor, moderate as it confessedly was, experienced numerous evasions, owing to the different construction which Magistrates would put upon it; but the Christians could not now, as formerly, be thrown to the lions because the people were impatient, and clamoured for blood. Hadrian began to reprobate wanton and malicious informations; and an accuser for a time ran no little risk, who summoned a Christian to meet him in a court of judicature. Some writers assert that persecution did not cease until after a period of three years, under the impression that the edict occupied this time in persuading the Priests and people that the Christians could only be punished for some definite crime: be this so; several of the despised and suffering church began to defend themselves in writing; and the numerous absurdities and vagaries of polytheism were rendered justly and with ease assailable by the ridiculous, but zealous, endeavours of Hadrian to support it. The deification of his favourite Antinous,* who was drowned in the Nile, about the year 129, supplied the Christian apologists with the powerful weapon, sarcasm; and it must not be overlooked, that amidst all the efforts of the heathen Priests to excite hostility towards the church of Christ, there were but few who ventured to meet them in the arena of argument.

It was about this period that Hadrian passed a law which could not fail materially to affect the Christians. It was designated the "Imperial Edict," † and was drawn up by Salvius Julianus, a lawyer of some celebrity, who, with some others of the same profession, was consulted by the Emperor. "It enacted," says Dr. Burton, "that all cities and towns throughout the empire should follow the laws and customs of Rome, instead of their own local regulations, which used to be published at the beginning of each year, and ceased to be in force when the year was ended. Hadrian must have seen the inconvenience of this system in the course of his travels; and the perpe-

* "Antinous is represented as having been an extremely beautiful youth, which induced Hadrian to take him as his page and companion in all his journeys. He was a native of the town of Bithynum, also called Claudiopolis, in Bithynia. While Hadrian was staying in Egypt, Antinous was drowned in the Nile, by accident; but Dion Cassius thinks it more probable that he threw himself into the river, with the view of averting some danger which threatened his master. The Emperor's grief knew no bounds. On the spot where his favourite had perished he built a city, which was called Antinoopolis, or Antinoea. Temples were raised to him in Egypt and several parts of Greece, and the number of his statues was immense. The constellation which bears the name of Antinous, to the present day, was declared by the soothsayers to be the soul of that individual, and to have come into existence on the day on which he died. In some places, as at Bithynum, and at Mantinea in Peloponnesus, Antinous was worshipped as a god; and in the latter place mysteries were celebrated in honour of him every year, and games every fifth year." (See Pausanias, lib. viii., cap. ix., sect. 4; Dion Cassius, lib. lxix., p. 793, fol., Hanoviæ, 1606; Spartianus in Hadrian., cap. xiv.)

† "I do not conceive that this law of Hadrian, in its import, differed very materially from that of Trajan; but that the punishment of death continued still to be inflicted, under the imperial sanction, on all such Christians as were convicted of professing a contempt for the gods, and persisted in refusing to alter their opinion. 'Si quis ergo accuset et ostendat quidpiam contra leges ab iis factum, tu pro gravitate delicti statue.' The form of expression is at least ambiguous, and left to the Presidents the most ample power of punishing the Christians, since the worship of the gods was enjoined by the laws." (Mosheim's Commentaries, vol. ii., p. 55.)

tual edict, in a civil point of view, was a great improvement. It is supposed to have been promulgated in the year 131 or 132, at which time the Emperor appears to have been principally in Greece; and there is no evidence that he intended it to operate to the prejudice of the Christians. It may, however, have had this tendency, when executed by persons who were enemies of the Gospel. The rule, that all places should follow the laws and customs of Rome, might be construed to mean, that there should be an uniformity in religious, as well as in civil, institutions; and thus the perpetual edict might be made a direct means of harassing the Christians, who certainly did not adhere, in matters of religion, to the laws and customs of Rome." This edict remained in force until the death of Hadrian, though attempts were frequently made to evade the difficulty which it threw in the way of the enemies of Christianity, by charges of impiety and atheism. Tranquillity was doubtless restored to the church at large; but in Judea it was broken by the frantic proceedings of an impostor named Barcochebas, who inflicted the most cruel tortures upon the followers of the Redeemer in that country, who refused to recognise his character as a Prophet, or to unite with him against the Romans. Hadrian also found employment which effectually drew his attention from the Christian church, at least for a time.

For some time the Jews had manifested symptoms of discontent, and bore with great impatience the introduction of heathen practices into the holy city. They durst not have recourse to arms while the Emperor was in their neighbourhood; and so long as his travels kept him in Syria and Egypt, they concealed their intentions. The insurrection occurred about the year 132, when Jerusalem was not merely a mass of ruins inhabited by the stranger, but when the Pagans were about to make their permanent residence upon the site of Sion, and a temple to a Gentile idol to usurp the place which was once filled with the glory of the Schekinah. At this momentous crisis, when the expectations of the Israelites were trembling between alternate hope and fear, it was announced that the Messiah had appeared. He had come in power and in glory, and his name was said to have fulfilled the prophecy of Balaam. Barcochebas,* or Barochab, the son of the star, was foolishly asserted to be that luminary which was to arise out of Jacob. Wonders attended upon his person, he breathed flames from his mouth,† which no doubt would burn up the strength of the proud oppressor, and wither the armies of the tyrannical Hadrian. He was a man of no common vigour and ability. At the first threatening of the revolt, Rufus, who was then Prefect in Palestine, poured all the troops he had into the disturbed districts; he seized and imprisoned Akiba, the second in command; but either his forces

* Little is known of his previous history. According to report, he had at one time been a robber, and his conduct shows, that he must have been a man thoroughly conversant with scenes of blood and rapine; while the devotedness of his followers, and the vigorous, and, for a time, successful, resistance he made to the Romans, evince him a man of talent and energy. (Basnage's History of the Jews.)

† He had learned a trick of keeping lighted tow, or straw, in his mouth, which was the secret of his breathing flames, to the terror of his enemies, and the unbounded confidence of his partisans. (Milman's History of the Jews, vol. iii., p. 118.)

or his ability were unequal to the crisis. The Romans could not believe that, with the former war still vivid in the memory of the fathers of the present generation, the Jews would provoke the danger of a second exterminating conflict. But for some time the insurgents had been busily employed in laying up stores of arms. By degrees they obtained possession of all the strong heights, raised walls and fortifications, dug or enlarged subterranean caverns and passages, both for retreat and communication, and contrived, by holes from above, to let light and air into those secret citadels, where they deposited their arms, held their councils, and concealed themselves from the vigilance of the enemy. Multitudes crowded openly, or stole in secret, to range themselves under the banner of the insurgents. The whole Jewish race was in commotion. Those who could not assist in person, contributed their treasures; so that Barcochebas, if we may credit the Rabbins, found himself, ere long, at the head of two hundred thousand men.* The Christians alone stood aloof, and would lend no ear nor pay any respect to the claims of another Messiah, a man of robbery and bloodshed, of earthly pretensions, and the aspirant founder of a temporal kingdom: consequently, the insurgent subjected those whom he could place within his power to the most cruel tortures, and put all such to death without mercy as refused, in spite of the various torments which were inflicted upon them, to abjure the faith of Christ.

The first expedition of Barcochebas was to make himself master of the ruins of Jerusalem, upon which his banner was first unfurled, and where he assumed the name of King, and issued coins with his superscription.† The Jews, however, shrunk from a battle in the open field. The Roman Commander, Turnus Rufus, revenged himself with the most unrelenting cruelties on the defenceless. According to Eusebius,‡ he put to death thousands of men, women, and children. But the obstinate courage and activity of the Jews were unbroken; they pursued their deliberate system of defence; so that on the arrival of the celebrated Julius Severus, who was sent to supersede Rufus, to take the command, they were in possession of fifty of the strongest castles, and nine hundred and eighty-five villages. Severus had learned the art of war against desperate savages in Britain. He turned their own policy against the insurgents. He ventured on no general battle with an enemy now, perhaps, grown to an overwhelming force; but he attacked their strongholds in detail, cut off their supplies, and reduced them to the greatest distress by famine. At length the discipline of the Roman troops, and the consummate conduct of Severus, brought the war nearly to a close. The strong city of Bitthera alone remained, the metropolis and citadel of the insurgents. It was not long before Barcochebas alienated and dispirited his followers by his brutal and

* Milman's History of the Jews, vol. iii., p. 120.

† There is no historical account of this event, though there seems little doubt of the fact. Tychsen and others have concluded, from extant coins, that he was in possession of Jerusalem for three years: if so, it was from 132 to 135. The coins, however, are of very doubtful date and authority. (Milman.)

‡ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. iv., cap. 6.

sanguinary conduct. The city was at length stormed, the insurgent was slain, and his head was carried in triumph to the Roman camp. Of the subsequent massacre, the Rabbins tell frightful stories; but their horror is mitigated by their extravagance. More are said to have fallen at Bitthera than escaped with Moses from Egypt. The horses waded up to their bits in carnage. Blood flowed so copiously, that the stream carried stones weighing four pounds into the sea, according to their account, forty miles distant. The dead covered eighteen square miles, and the inhabitants of the adjacent region had no need to manure their ground for seven years. A more trustworthy authority, Dio Cassius, states, that during the whole war, the enormous number of five hundred and eighty thousand fell by the sword, not including those who perished by famine, disease, and fire. The whole of Judea was a desert; wolves and hyenas went howling along the streets of the desolate cities. Those who escaped the sword were scarcely more fortunate: they were reduced to slavery by thousands. There was a great fair held under a celebrated Terebinth,* which tradition had consecrated as the very tree under which Abraham had pitched his tent. Thither his miserable children were brought in droves, and sold as cheap as horses. Others were carried away, and sold at Gaza; others transported to Egypt. The fate of Akiba, the herald and forerunner of Barcochebas, was dreadful. He was summoned before Rufus. In the midst of his interrogations, he remembered that it was the hour of prayer. He fell on his knees, regardless of the presence of the Roman, and of the pending trial for life and death, and calmly went through his devotions. In the prison, while his lips were burning with thirst, he nevertheless applied his scanty pittance of water to his ablutions. The barbarous

* Hadrian, more effectually to evacuate the city of its old inhabitants, caused a great part of them to be sold at the fair of Terebinth. Hegesippus says, that the Terebinth was a tree, that had continued from the creation of the world, under which they met to traffic: it was said to be the place where Abraham pitched his tent, and received the angels, which made it venerable. The Jews were exposed to sale there at the price of horses; and those that could not be sold were carried to another fair, which was kept at Gaza. In Jerome's time, they applied to this misery these words: "A cry was heard in Ramah, Rachel weeping for her children;" because their misery and affliction were excessive. This Father also applied to the miseries that happened under Hadrian the following prophecy of Zechariah: "I will feed the flock of slaughter," (Zech. xi. 7,) because that he had learned from tradition, and the history of the Jews, that this Prince had put a great number to death without being punished by God, and that afterwards he sold them at Terebinth, or carried them into Egypt. He also acquaints us with three things: 1. That he had read the traditions and history of the Jews concerning their calamities, and therefore there must have been such at that time. 2. That Terebinth fair still continued; but that the Jews were ashamed to be present at it, because of the usage of their fathers. He adds, in another place, that the Jews assembled and came in his time to buy of the soldiers the liberty of seeing Jerusalem. They could not weep without paying for it; and those who had bought the blood of our Saviour, purchased their very tears. The women and old men, laden with tatters and years, were seen with tears in their eyes repairing to the Mount of Olives, and bewailing the destruction of the temple. The soldiers made for a long time advantage of the veneration of the Jews for the rubbish of the holy city, and also of Hadrian's severity in forbidding their entrance for ever; for they sold at a dear rate the sight of the place, and the liberty of strewing perfumes upon a stone. And, finally, Jerome assures us, that Hadrian conveyed part of these prisoners to Egypt, where their number was considerably augmented. (Basnage's History of the Jews, book vi., chap. ix., sect. xxviii., p. 519. Folio. London, 1708.)

Roman ordered the old man to be flayed alive, and then put to death. The most furious persecution was commenced against all the Rabbins, who were considered the authors and ringleaders of the insurrection. Chanania, the son of Theradion, was detected reading and expounding the law: he was burned with the book which he was reading. It was forbidden to fill up the number of the great synagogue, or Sanhedrim; but Akiba, just before his death, had named five new members; and Judah, the son of Bavah, secretly nominated others in a mountain-glen where he had taken refuge. Soldiers were sent to surprise Judah: he calmly awaited their coming, and was transfixed by three hundred spears.*

To annihilate for ever all hopes of the restoration of the Jewish kingdom, Hadrian accomplished his plan of founding a new city on the site of Jerusalem, peopled by a colony of foreigners. He is said to have built a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus on the spot which had been occupied by the Jewish temple. A statue of Jupiter was placed over the sepulchre of our Saviour, and another of Venus on Mount Calvary. The worship of Adonis was established at Bethlehem; and it was now that the name of Jerusalem gave way to that of Ælia Capitolina, in honour of the Emperor, who bore the name of Ælius. An edict was issued prohibiting any Jew from entering the new city on pain of death, or approaching its environs, so as to contemplate even at a distance the sacred spot. Still more effectually to deter their approach, the image of a swine was placed over the gate leading to Bethlehem; and thus terminated the campaign of Hadrian against the Jewish nation.

Hadrian was now fast verging towards the end of his earthly career, which took place in the year 138, after he had nominated Antoninus as his son and successor, who received the surname of Pius. Christianity at this period was generally spreading. It had been recognised in the most civilized portions of the empire, and carried into districts comparatively barbarous. The reign of Hadrian was the first in which the works of Christian writers made their appearance. We have alluded to the Apologies of Quadratus † and Aristides; but Agrippa Castor wrote against the doctrines promulgated by Basilides, and, according to Eusebius, he was not the only author who engaged in this controversy. The celebrity of the Gospel, and the advances it was making upon the strongholds of Heathenism, were manifest by the pains which were taken to confute it. One of the most elaborate treatises which was ever written against the Gospel, was composed by Celsus, in the reign of Hadrian. The work itself has long since perished, and only a few fragments of it are preserved by Origen, who published his celebrated reply to the treatise in the middle of the third cen-

* Milman's History of the Jews, vol. iii., p. 124.

† Quadratus is mentioned with great respect by Eusebius and Jerome, and was the first who ventured to address the Roman Emperors in behalf of the persecuted church of Christ. We are told by some, that owing to the violence of the enemies of the church, he was obliged to leave his charge in Athens, and flee to Magnesia, a city of Ionia, in Asia Minor, where he preached the Gospel, and there "he suffered martyrdom about the end of Hadrian's reign, being first tormented with various punishments." This account, however, is destitute of any authority upon which we can rely.

tury, from whence we are enabled to form an accurate idea respecting its nature: he minutely examines all the arguments of his opponent in the order they are brought forward, and in his own words. There is no work at present extant of which we have more considerable remains: in effect, it is the same, says Dr. Welsh, as if we had the entire work of Celsus. The objections against Christianity, which were adduced by this writer, are those in the main that are urged by infidel writers of the present day. He searched the Gospel for arguments against the Gospel. He attacks several of the principles of the New Testament, and attempts to prove by ridicule and argument that they are inconsistent with one another, and with the doctrines of a sound philosophy; he labours to lower our idea of the miracles which are recorded in the New Testament, by showing that as wonderful works had been performed by magicians; he assails the character of our Saviour, ridicules the idea of his being considered as a God, and endeavours to show that higher virtues were exhibited by different philosophers.* Celsus, however, makes no attempt to exhibit the spuriousness of the writings of the disciples, or to bring forward facts inconsistent with their statements: on the contrary, he takes the books of the New Testament as he finds them, he quotes from them as the acknowledged writings of those who were the followers of Jesus, he bears testimony to many of the leading facts contained in these books,† and he never speaks of any writings as existing in his time which could be brought forward to invalidate what the Scriptures contain. In this way, Celsus has been justly considered by many writers as a witness in favour of Christianity. There are many respects in which his testimony is invaluable. Dr. Doddridge says, "There are in Celsus about eighty quotations from the books of the New Testament, or references to them, of which Origen has taken notice. And whilst he argues from them sometimes in a very perverse and malicious manner, he still takes it for granted, as the foundation of his argument, that whatever absurdities

* A single example is sufficient to show the manner in which Celsus misrepresented the principles of the Christians. "That I," observes the philosopher, "say nothing more severe than truth obliges me to say, is manifest hence:—when others invite to the mysteries, they invite men after this manner: 'Whoever has clean hands and a good understanding;' or, 'Whosoever is pure from vice, whose soul is conscious of no evil, and lives according to the law of righteousness, let him come hither.' Now, let us see whom they (the Christians) invite. 'Whoever,' they say, 'is a sinner, whoever is ignorant, whoever is silly, and, in a word, whoever is miserable, these the kingdom of God receives.' Whom do you mean by 'sinners?' Do you not thereby intend thieves and robbers, prisoners, sacrilegious, and the like? And what else would men say who aim to form a society of the worst of men?" (Orig. contra Celsum, lib. iii., p. 147. Quarto edit. Cant., 1677.) The reply of Origen is as follows:—"It is one thing to invite sick souls to come to be healed, and another thing to call such as are cured to partake of higher mysteries. We who know the difference of these two things, first invite men to come and be healed, and we exhort sinners to attend to those who teach men not to sin; and the ignorant and unwise we exhort to hearken to those who will teach them wisdom: the weak we exhort to aim at manly wisdom, and the miserable we invite to accept of happiness, or, to speak more properly, blessedness. And when they whom we have admonished have made some progress, and have learned to live well, then they are initiated by us." (Welsh's Elements.)

† So fully, indeed, does he bear this testimony, that "an abridgment of the life of Christ may be found in his writings." (Doddridge. See Lardner's Works, vol. vii., p. 270.)

could be fastened upon any words or actions of Christ, recorded in the Evangelists, it would be a valid objection against Christianity; thereby in effect assuring us, not only that such a book did really exist, but that it was universally received by Christians in those times as credible and divine. Who can forbear adoring the depth of infinite wisdom in laying such a firm foundation for our faith in the Gospel history, in the writings of one who was so inveterate an enemy to it, and so indefatigable in his attempts to overthrow it? Celsus does not appear to have founded any single objection against Christianity upon any of the spurious Gospels, Acts, or Revelations, which, considering his malice on the one hand, and the many foolish and exceptionable things to be found in them on the other, seems to be a good argument that he never saw them. Else he had hardly candour enough to forbear pleading such arguments as they might have afforded him; even though he had known that the Christians did not esteem them of equal authority with those which he has so furiously, but at the same time so impotently, assaulted." *

Another summary of the argument of Celsus has been given by Dr. Leland, which he concludes by observing, "The use that I would make of all this, is as follows:—That it appears, with an uncontested evidence by the testimony of one of the most malicious and virulent adversaries the Christian religion ever had, and who was also a man of considerable parts and learning, that the writings of the Evangelists were extant in his time, (which was in the next century to that in which the Apostles lived,) and that these accounts were written by Christ's own disciples, and, consequently, that they were written in the very age in which the facts there related were done, and when, therefore, it would have been the easiest thing in the world to have convicted them of falsehood if they had not been true." † As a writer, Celsus does not appear to have been either acute or profound: his opinions upon the subjects of philosophy and religion seem to have been unsettled, and are often contradictory; and his objections to Christianity are such as would present themselves to almost any mind that takes up the Bible with a determination to explain it in a way inconsistent with the idea of its divine origin. Accordingly we find that many of his arguments have been repeated by infidels age after age; and after being a thousand times refuted, they are still advanced with apparently undiminished confidence in their force and originality.‡ Celsus undertook to effect by his pen what Magistrates and Emperors had failed to do by the torture and the sword. He fancied that the new religion could be overthrown by sarcasm and invective; but he little thought that his own philosophy was then hastening to its decay; and that the only memory of himself and his writings would be preserved in the pages of the Christians who confuted him.§

* Doddridge apud Lardner's Works, vol. vii., p. 274. 8vo. edit. London, 1831.

† Leland's "Answer to a Book intituled, 'Christianity as old as the Creation,'" part ii., chap. v., vol. ii., p. 124. Second edit. London, 1740.

‡ Welsh's Elements of Church History, vol. i., p. 333.

§ Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xvi., p. 94. 8vo. edition, 1833.

In the course of the year 138, an inveterate malady carried Hadrian off the stage of life. He caused himself to be conveyed to the city of Baiæ, in the hope of obtaining some relief, but in vain. His pain was at times excruciating, by which he was frequently thrown into strong convulsions. Frequently he attempted self-destruction; and, failing to effect his purpose, he exclaimed, "How miserable it is to seek Death, and not to find him!" He made use of gifts and promises, and even threatenings, to induce his attendants to kill him: some, however, alleged pity, some piety, and others fear, as a reason why they refused to comply with his request, until, by the advice of his Physicians, he voluntarily, and with a doggedness which became a better cause, abstained from all kinds of food, which brought him to a speedy end. Thus died Hadrian, a Prince of some excellency, but stained with many vices and imperfections. Notwithstanding his active and inquisitive mind, and the ability of his general policy, few persons were, perhaps, less qualified to judge of the real nature of the new religion, or to comprehend the tenacious hold which it would obtain upon the mind of man. His character wanted depth and seriousness, to penetrate or to understand the workings of a high, profound, and settled religious enthusiasm. The graceful verses * which he addressed to his departing spirit, contrast with the solemn earnestness with which the Christians were teaching mankind to consider the mysteries of another life. But, on the whole, the long and peaceful reign of Hadrian allowed free scope to the progress of Christianity; the increasing wealth and prosperity of the empire probably raised in the social scale that class among which it was chiefly disseminated; while the better part of the more opulent would be tempted, at least, to make themselves acquainted with a religion, the moral influence of which was so manifestly favourable to the happiness of mankind, and which offered so noble a solution of the great problem of human philosophy, the immortality of the soul.†

* Animula, vagula, blandula,
Hospes, comesque, corporis,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca,
Pallidula, rigida, nudula,
Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos?

The above has been beautifully translated into English by Matthew Prior, with all the spirit of the original:—

"Poor, little, pretty, fluttering thing,
Must we no longer live together?
And dost thou prune thy trembling wing,
To take thy flight thou know'st not whither?

"Thy pleasing vein, thy humorous folly,
Lies all neglected, all forgot!
And pensive, wavering, melancholy,
Thou hop'st, and fear'st, thou know'st not what."

† Milman's History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 156.

CHAPTER III.

Hadrian and Antoninus Pius compared—Character of the latter—Hostility to the Christians—And to the Jews—Telesphorus—Irenæus and Eusebius quoted—Arrius Antoninus—Persecuting Spirit of the Pagans—Edict of Antoninus—Its Object—Its Authenticity suspected—Apollonius—The Heretics Cerdon, Valentinus, and Marcion—First Apology of Justin—When presented—Antoninus unable to protect the Christians from Persecution—His Death. MARCUS AURELIUS—*Who associates with himself, in the Empire, Lucius Verus—Character of Marcus—In what Sense he was a Persecutor—Fate of Lucius Verus—Marcus is designated Philosopher—Position of Pagan Philosophy with regard to Christianity—Hostility of Marcus and his Government towards the Christians—How excited—Tertullian vindicates their Usefulness in Society—The Religion of Christ raises the Jealousy of the Pagans—Intemperate Language of many of the Teachers—Sibylline Verses—Superstitious Feelings of Marcus—From which the Christians suffer—Delatores of a disgraceful character—The Church given to the fury of Persecution—False Charges against the Christians—Cruelties inflicted—True Cause of the Enmity of the Emperor to Christianity—The Martyrdom of Felicitas and her Children — Plumbatæ — Praxedes — Ptolemæus and Lucius—Are martyred—Cause of the Second Apology of Justin—Notices of other Martyrs—Situation of the Church at this Period—Conjectures respecting the Date of the Second Apology—The supposed Edict of Marcus Aurelius, in the Acta Symphoriani, considered—Justin—His Birth and Education—His Travels—His Search after Knowledge—And Disappointment—His Conversation with the old Man—Which ends in his Conversion to the Truth—Writes on behalf of the Church—His Address to the Greeks—Visits Rome—Confutes the Marcionites—And defends the Faithful—Justin's philosophic Garb—He Returns to the Provinces—Disputes with Trypho the Jew—The perturbed State of the Church calls Justin again to Rome—He is brought into contact with Crescens—The Character of this Man—The Condition of the Cynic School at this period—Its Decline and Fall—Justin's Vindication of Christianity—Crescens an inveterate Enemy to Justin—By whom Evil is foreboded from his Machinations — Justin is thrown into Prison — Junius Rusticus—The Examination of Justin and his Companions—And their subsequent Martyrdom.*

THE restless spirit of Hadrian was remarkable, when compared with the gentle repose of his successor, the Emperor Antoninus Pius. The life of the former was almost a perpetual journey; and, to adopt the language of Gibbon, as he possessed the various talents of the soldier, the statesman, and the scholar, he gratified his curiosity in the discharge of his duty. Careless of the difference of seasons and of climates, he marched on foot, and bare-headed, over the snows of Caledonia, and the sultry plains of Upper Egypt; nor was there a province of the empire which, in the course of his reign, was not honoured with the presence of the Monarch. But the tranquil life of Antoninus Pius was spent in the bosom of Italy; and, during the twenty-three years that he directed the public administration, the longest journey of that Prince extended no farther than from his palace in Rome, to the retirement of his Lanuvian villa. Notwithstanding this difference in their personal conduct, the general system

of Augustus was equally adopted and uniformly pursued by Hadrian, and the two Antonines. They persisted in the design of maintaining the dignity of the empire, without attempting to enlarge its limits. By every honourable expedient they invited the friendship of the barbarians; and endeavoured to convince mankind that the Roman power, raised above the temptation of conquest, was actuated only by the love of order and justice. During a long period of forty-three years, their labours were crowned with success; and, if we except a few slight hostilities, that served to exercise the legions of the frontier, the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius presented the fair prospect of universal peace.* The Roman name was revered among the remote nations of the earth. The fiercest barbarians frequently submitted their differences to the arbitration of the Emperor; and we are informed by a contemporary historian,† that he had seen Ambassadors who were refused the honour which they came to solicit, of being admitted into the rank of subjects.‡

The character of Antoninus was, doubtless, deeply tinged with superstition. If he were really attached to the religion of his country, he could not fail to be hostile to the Christians; and the situation which he held in the state, before he assumed the purple, must have convinced him that Christianity was rapidly spreading. Nothing but the general disposition of the Emperor can enable us to judge of his religious sentiments. At the conclusion of the late Jewish war, the Israelites were forbidden to exercise circumcision upon proselytes and their own offspring: Antoninus so far relaxed this severity, that he allowed it to be performed on the latter, but not upon the former.§ According to the almost indisputable authority of Irenæus, Telesphorus, the Bishop of Rome, suffered martyrdom in the early part of his reign; and, if so, it is not improbable that other Christians also suffered for the sake of Christ: the games and other solemnities, which were intended to celebrate the commencement of a new reign, would, doubtless, remove impediments from the path of those who not only cherished hostility to the Gospel, but were determined,

* We must, however, remember, that, in the time of Hadrian, a rebellion of the Jews raged with religious fury, though only in a single province. Pausanias (lib. viii., cap. 43) mentions two necessary and successful wars, conducted by the Generals of Pius:— 1. Against the wandering Moors, who were driven into the solitudes of Atlas. 2. Against the Brigantes of Britain, who had invaded the Roman province.

† Appian of Alexandria, in the preface to his History of the Roman Wars.

‡ Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. i., p. 12. Milman's Edit. 8vo. 1838.

§ Tertullian speaks of an Arrius Antoninus, who persecuted the church with great severity in Asia; and when all the Christians in the place came to him in a body, offering themselves to be put to death, he is reported to have said to them, contemptuously, "Miserable men! if you wish to die, are there no precipices nor halters?" There is little ground for the supposition, that this individual ultimately became the Emperor; and the story may be referred with greater probability to Arrius Antoninus who was Proconsul of Asia in the reign of Commodus. There were two Proconsuls of Asia of this name; the one under Hadrian, maternal grandfather to Antoninus Pius, twice Consul. Capitolinus calls him, "vir sanctus:" he publicly compassionated Nerva for having come to a throne. The other lived under Commodus, who, having put him to death on false accusation, was obliged to give up his accuser to popular justice. See Tertulliani Opera, tom. ii. Ad Scapulum, cap. v. Edit. Wirceb., 1781. Library of the Fathers. Tertullian. Vol. i., p. 148.

whenever an opportunity presented itself, to impede its progress, and to persecute to death those who propagated it. Irenæus says, with regard to the Bishop, "Telesphorus, qui etiam gloriosissime martyrium fecit;" and Eusebius records, "In the first year of this reign, and in the eleventh year of his episcopate, Telesphorus departed this life, and was succeeded in the charge of the Roman church by Hyginus." Irenæus, indeed, relates, that Telesphorus was rendered illustrious by martyrdom.* More of him, we know not.

Notwithstanding the boasted clemency and authority of Antoninus, he experienced great difficulty in suppressing the persecuting inclinations which infected the minds of his pagan subjects. He is said to have addressed to the assembly of Asia, an edict,† which was intended to operate favourably on behalf of the persecuted, which is found extant in the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius.‡ "I am convinced," says the Emperor, "that it is for the gods themselves to take care that men of this kind should not escape; for it is much more fitting that they should punish those who refuse to worship them, than that you should. But while you accuse them as impious, you, in many instances, confirm the opinions and sentiments of those against whom you rise so tumultuously. It is, in fact, much more desirable for them to be condemned, and to seem to suffer death for their God, than to remain safe; for thus they become victors, proving that they prefer sacrificing their lives to doing those things which you command. Concerning the earthquakes§ which have occurred, or are even now taking place, it is not improper to admonish you, who lose your fortitude when such things occur, and yet compare your principles with theirs. They, in such circumstances, place a greater confidence in God, while you, failing through want of knowledge, as it seems to me, neglect the gods and your other duties, and the service of the immortals. But the Christians, who worship Him, you expel and persecute unto death. Many of the Governors of provinces formerly addressed our most sacred father concerning them; and he wrote in reply, that they were not to exercise force against them, unless they appeared to be undertaking anything against the Roman government. And many persons have also brought information to me respecting them, and the informants I have answered according to the decision of my father; but if any one should still be determined on troubling these persons on account of their profession, let the accused be set free, although he should be proved a Christian, and the accuser punished."‖ Considerable uneasiness was experienced by the Christians

* Irenæi Opera, lib. iii., cap. 3. Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. iv., cap. 10.

† Many attribute this edict to Marcus Aurelius, the successor of Antoninus; but Mosheim and others as strenuously ascribe it to the present Emperor. Dr. Welsh, in his "Elements of Church History," without any hesitation, says, it "is obviously a forgery."

‡ Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. iv., cap. 13.

§ "Adversa," says Capitolinus in his Life of Antoninus, "ejus temporibus hæc provenerunt: fames de qua diximus, circi ruina. *Terræ motus* quo Rhodiorum et *Asiæ oppida conciderunt;* quæ omnia mirifice instauravit."

‖ Notwithstanding the issuing of the edict by Antoninus was unquestionably productive of considerable advantage to the Christian cause, and imposed a restraint upon the officious forwardness of evil-disposed persons, yet the interests of Christianity

in Rome, by the appearance of several notorious and distinguished heretics, among whom were Cerdon, Marcion, and Valentinus.* It was in this city that Polycarp, the celebrated Bishop of Smyrna, came in contact with Marcion, and publicly rebuked his errors. He was by no means favourably received by the church, inasmuch as they had, probably, heard of the crime which had ejected him from his own country. In the midst of these conflicts within, the Christians were far from being free from trials without, which is proved by an interesting document which is still extant, the first Apology or Defence presented by Justin Martyr to the Emperor Antoninus. The date of its presentation has led to much discussion; and while some would place it as early as 139, others would make it as late as 148, or 150. Dr. Burton observes, that a strong argument is found in the fact of Lucius Verus, who was afterwards Emperor, being mentioned in terms of panegyric; and since he was born in 131, he would have received this compliment at the age of eight years, if Justin's Apology were written in 139. We are, therefore, inclined to agree with those writers who adopt the later date. We are not aware what was the effect of the Apology on the mind of the

would have been benefited in a much higher degree, had he repealed that law of Trajan which awarded the punishment of death to all such Christians as should be convicted of having abandoned, and refused to return to, the religion of their ancestors. The law of Trajan was, however, suffered to remain in full force; and yet, at the same time, the edict of Antoninus, of a nature altogether repugnant to it, was introduced into the forum. Iniquitous and cruel Judges might, therefore, if they thought proper, cause both the accuser and the accused to be put to death; the former under the edict of Antoninus Pius, the latter under that of Trajan, which none of the Emperors had thought it proper to repeal. Of a case of this kind, a very notable example is recorded by Eusebius. (Hist. Eccles., lib. v., cap. 21.) Apollonius, a man respectable for his gravity and learning, was, under the reign of Commodus, accused of being a Christian. The Judges forthwith condemned his accuser to have his legs broken, and to be put to death; for by the edict of Antoninus it was ordained, that capital punishment should be inflicted on all accusers of this sort. But by these same Judges was Apollonius himself also, after he had publicly rendered an account of the religion that he professed, and openly acknowledged himself to be a Christian, adjudged to suffer death. For, by an ancient law, says Eusebius, it was enacted, that if any Christians should be once regularly brought before the public tribunal, they should on no account be dismissed with impunity, unless they would repudiate their religion. Now what other ancient law could this be, that was so directly repugnant to the edict of Antoninus, than the rescript of Trajan to Pliny? By thus artfully having recourse to ancient laws that had not been expressly repealed, did the iniquity and injustice of the Roman Magistrates frequently find means to deprive the Christians of every benefit to which they were entitled under enactments of a more recent date. (Mosheim's Commentaries.)

* Cerdon appears at one time to have been a Christian. Irenæus speaks of his confessing his errors more than once, and finally withdrawing from the church in consequence of the rebuke which he received for his doctrines. He was a follower of Saturninus, and the leader of a Gnostic sect at Antioch. Valentinus is said to have been an Egyptian, who studied at Alexandria, and was partial to the doctrines of Plato. He is supposed to have been of some note; and if it be true that he aspired to a bishopric, he probably fell into heresy through disappointment at the election of a rival. The scene of his apostacy is laid in Cyprus. Marcion was a native of Sinope in Pontus; and Tertullian applies to him a term which might signify that he was a sailor, or shipowner. (De Præscript. Hæret., cap. xxx.) Other accounts say, that his father was a Christian Bishop, and that Marcion's earlier days were spent in a kind of monastic or ascetic retirement. The sequel of his history is very disgraceful. Having seduced a young woman, he was expelled from the church by his own father, whose principles are represented as particularly strict, and Marcion tried in vain to soften him into forgiveness. He went immediately to Rome, and publicly professed heretical notions. It was on a visit to the imperial city that Polycarp was brought into contact with Marcion.

Emperor: a letter appears at the end of the document, and is preserved by Eusebius, which the historian represents as an edict addressed by Antoninus Pius to the cities of Asia, and is decidedly in favour of the Christians; but that is the edict to which we have already alluded. One writer asserts, that he treated the Christians with kindness in consequence of this Apology; and another goes so far as to say, that he gave no trouble to the Christians, but treated them with respect, and even showed them honour. The Emperor, however, was not able to protect them from their enemies. During his reign, they were in the same situation with regard to the laws as in the days of Hadrian; but this negative clemency of the Emperor's did not screen the believers in Christ from private malice, or from acts of popular violence; and the Apology of Justin, though it may show that Antoninus was willing to hear reason, proves that persecution was carried on even in his own capital. He died in the year 161, and was succeeded by Marcus Aurelius.

The death of Antoninus Pius was greatly regretted throughout the empire, but especially in Rome, where, with great pomp and solemnity, divine honours were awarded him, funeral orations were spoken by his adopted sons Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, and a magnificent column was erected to his honour. At the same time Marcus Aurelius, who was without contradiction recognised as Emperor by the Senate, took his adopted brother Lucius, as his associate and equal. This was the first time that Rome witnessed two Sovereigns wielding the same sceptre, who formerly had shed some of her bravest and most noble blood in the election of one. Antoninus Marcus was the son of Annius Verus, of an ancient and illustrious family, who, by the father's side, claimed an origin from Numa the second King of Rome. Verus was the son of Lucius Commodus, whom the Emperor Hadrian had adopted, but death prevented his succession to the empire. Marcus Aurelius was of a more lofty and active character than his predecessor. He appeared on the stage of public affairs as the last effort of Paganism, or rather of Gentile philosophy, to raise a worthy opponent to the triumphant career of Christianity. He was a passive disciple in the severest school of stoical philosophy,* and thoroughly imbibed all its prejudices and predilections. Toward Christianity he was a violent and intolerant persecutor. Not, indeed, that he devised or followed any general and systematic plan for its extirpation, but he withdrew the ambiguous protection which former Emperors had thrown around it, and left it exposed to the excited passions, the wounded pride, and the jealous and interested feelings of its adversaries, neither discountenancing the indomitable determination of some haughty and cruel Governor, to subdue what he considered a contumacious resistance to his authority, nor the vociferous and sanguinary outbreak of popular fury, which sought to appease

* Marcus was a Prince of eminent virtues and accomplishments, and a renowned Stoic philosopher, for which he is distinguished from his predecessor by the name of Philosophus. His excellencies were so transcendant, that Eutropius tells us, he was more to be admired than commended; and it may be said, that Providence proportioned the wisdom of this Emperor to the calamities of his reign. (Echard's Roman History, vol. ii., p. 314.)

the offended gods by the sacrifice of all who bore the Christian name. Lucius Verus was destitute of whatever moral qualifications Marcus might possess: he was passionate and extravagant, licentious and dissolute; and the greatest of his excellencies consisted in that he was free from those horrible crimes which lead a ruler to degenerate into a tyrant. After reigning joint-Emperor with Marcus for about nine years, he died, not without suspicion that poison was the cause of his death, which some have attributed to the Empress Faustina, and others to his own wife Lucilla, on account of a criminal passion which he entertained toward his own sister Fabia: an end which fully coincided with his iniquitous and abandoned life.

Christianity had assumed, at this period of its history, sufficient importance to attract the attention of the learned, and philosophers were led to contemplate and investigate it. In considering the quarter from whence an attack was now to be anticipated, we must be careful not to be misled by a name. Many have represented the philosophical opponents of the first Christians as men of a calm temperament, guided solely by their reason, to which they subjected all their feelings, and looking upon the religion of Jesus with the same scepticism as that in which they viewed the superstitions of their own countrymen. In reality, however, nothing can be more erroneous. The great body of the heathen philosophers, if not themselves credulously superstitious, were the basest flatterers of the popular prejudices; abandoned in their own morals; and finding their success in courting the people, by rendering themselves subservient to their most unworthy views. There were, no doubt, some of a superior character. But these either gave themselves up to the pride of intellectual pre-eminence, with an utter indifference to all that bore practically upon the interests of the species, or in their systems cherished dogmas irreconcilable with the pure and humbling doctrines of the Gospel. The idea of a revelation that superseded all the speculations of human ingenuity, and placed the learned and the unlearned upon a level, with regard to all the questions for attaining a superiority to which they devoted their whole lives, could not but be repugnant to the followers of Plato; while the Stoics found the doctrines of the dependent and fallen condition of man incompatible with their most dearly-cherished principles.*

Numerous circumstances conspired to excite the hostility of Marcus Aurelius and his government against the Christian faith. Mr. Milman adverts particularly to the change which had taken place in the relative position of Christianity with the religion of the empire. It had spread into numerous quarters of the Roman dominions. The western provinces, Gaul and Africa, rivalled the east in the number, if not in the opulence, of their Christian congregations: in almost every city had gradually arisen a separate community, seceding from the ordinary habits and usages of life, at least from the public religious ceremonial, governed by its own laws, acting upon a common principle, and bound together in a kind of latent federal union throughout the empire. A new kind of literature had arisen, propagated

* Welsh's Elements of Church History, vol. i., p. 272.

with the utmost zeal of proselytism, among a numerous class of readers, who began to close their ears against the profane fables, and unsatisfactory philosophical systems, of Paganism. While the Emperor himself condescended, in Greek of no despicable purity and elegance for the age, to explain the lofty tenets of the Porch,* and to commend its noble morality to his subjects, the minds of a large portion of the world were pre-occupied by writers, who, in language often impregnated with foreign and Syrian barbarisms, enforced still higher morals, resting upon religious tenets altogether new and incomprehensible, excepting to the initiated. Christians were to be found in the court, in the camp, in the commercial market; they discharged all the duties, and did not decline any of the offices, of society. Tertullian indignantly repels the charge of their being useless to the commonwealth: "We are not Brachmans, or the naked philosophers of the Indians, dwelling in the woods, and outcasts from life. We remember that we owe gratitude to God, our Lord and our Maker. We put not away from us any enjoyment of his works. Certainly we refrain from using them immoderately or wrongfully. Wherefore we live with you in this world, not without a forum, not without shambles, not without your baths, taverns, shops, inns, markets, and other places of traffic. We voyage, moreover, with you, serve in your armies, labour with you in the fields, and trade with you. Besides this, we join our crafts with yours. Our acquirements, our services, we lend to the public for your profit. How can we be thought to be unprofitable to you in your concerns, you with whom, and by whom, we live?" †

This was not all. As Christianity became more influential, the apprehensions of many were excited by the idea, that the decline and fall of the old religion would speedily be followed by the disruption of the state. The language of some of the Christian teachers went far to justify these forebodings:‡ consequently, the disciples

* Marcus Aurelius is represented as having been a laborious student. His qualifications were the well-earned harvest of many a learned conference, of many a patient lecture, and many a midnight lucubration. At the age of twelve years, he embraced the rigid system of the Stoics, which taught him to submit his body to his mind, his passions to his reason; to consider virtue as the only good, vice as the only evil, all things external as things indifferent. His Meditations, composed in the tumult of a camp, are still extant; and he even condescended to give lessons of philosophy, in a more public manner than was perhaps consistent with the modesty of a sage, or the dignity of an Emperor. Before he went on the second expedition against the Germans, he read lectures of philosophy to the Roman people, during three days. He had already done the same in the cities of Greece and Asia. (Gibbon's Decline and Fall, vol. i., p. 135. 8vo. Milman's edit.)

† Tertull. Apologet., cap. xlii.

‡ Some considered the Apocalypse as referring, not to the fall of a predicted spiritual Rome, but of the dominant pagan Rome, the visible Babylon of idolatry and pride and cruelty. Many forged prophetic writings belong to the reign of the Antonines, and could emanate from no quarter but that of the more injudicious and fanatical Christians. The doctrine of the millennium added to the general panic. The visible throne of Christ was to be erected on the ruins of all earthly empires: the nature of such a kingdom would, doubtless, be unintelligible to the Heathen; and all that he would comprehend would be a vague notion that the government of the world was to be transferred from Rome, and that this extinction of the majesty of the empire was, in some incomprehensible manner, connected with the triumph of the new faith. The terror, indignation, and contempt of the Pagan, would induce fierce and implacable

of Christ were calumniated as guilty of treasonable disloyalty to the Emperor. The state of the times, also, was calculated to foster this growing alienation and hostility. The public mind was agitated with gloomy rumours from the frontier, and foreign and civil wars, inundations, earthquakes, and pestilences, awoke the affrighted empire from its slumber of tranquillity and peace. It was at this crisis of calamity and terror, that superstition, which had slumbered in Epicurean forgetfulness of its gods, awoke; and when it fled for help to the altar of the tutelar deity, the temple was found deserted, and the shrine forsaken. In the estimation of the Heathen, whether of ancient or modern times, no sacrifice is sufficiently costly wherewith to propitiate the gods, except human life. Paganism, and offering the life-blood of the Creator's noblest work, are almost universally synonymous. The Christians were the open and recognised enemies of the gods, whom it was said they had offended by their pertinacious apostacy; and by their blood only could their wrath be appeased. It would appear that the presentation of a hecatomb of Christians was no longer the clamour of personal or party dislike, or the craving of individuals who delighted to gratify a sanguinary and brutal appetite in the exhibition of human victims in the arena of an amphitheatre: it was nothing less than the deep and universal cry of fanatical terror, demanding the propitiation of the incensed gods by the sacrifice of the Christian believer, on whose head the guilt of all the calamities brooding at this period over the world, the misguided populace imagined ought to fall.

The boasted philosophy of Marcus Aurelius did not render him

animosity. The Sibylline verses, also, did much to increase the general consternation. A certain Prophet writing at this crisis, in the name of a Sibyl, dares to connect together the approaching fall of Rome and the gods of Rome: "O haughty Rome, the just chastisement of heaven shall come down upon thee from on high; thou shalt stoop thy neck, and be levelled with the earth; and fire shall consume thee, razed to thy very foundations; and thy wealth shall perish; wolves and foxes shall dwell among thy ruins, and thou shalt be desolate as if thou hadst never been. Where then will be thy Palladium? Which of thy gods of gold, or of stone, or of brass, shall save thee? Where then the decrees of thy Senate? where, the race of Rhea, of Saturn, or of Jove; all the lifeless deities thou hast worshipped, or the shades of the deified dead? When thrice five gorgeous Cæsars," (the twelve Cæsars, usually so called, with Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian,) "who have enslaved the world from east to west, shall be, one will arise silver-helmed, with a name like the neighbouring sea" (Hadrian and the Hadriatic sea). The poet describes the busy and lavish character of Hadrian, his curiosity in prying into all religious mysteries, and his deification of Antinous. "After him shall reign three, whose times shall be the last. Then from the uttermost parts of the earth, whither he fled, shall the matricide" (Nero) "return. And now, O King of Rome, shalt thou mourn, disrobed of the purple laticlave of thy rulers, and clad in sackcloth. The glory of thy eagle-bearing legions shall perish. Where shall be thy might? What land, which thou hast enslaved by thy vain laurels, shall be thine ally? For there shall be confusion on all mortals over the whole earth, when the Almighty Ruler comes, and, seated upon his throne, judges the souls of the quick and of the dead, and of the whole world. There shall be wailing and scattering abroad, and ruin, when the fall of the cities shall come; and the abyss of earth shall open." In another passage, the desolation of Italy, the return of Nero, the general massacre of Kings, are portrayed in fearful terms. The licentiousness of Rome is detailed in the blackest colours. "Sit silent in thy sorrow, O guilty and luxurious city; the vestal virgins shall no longer watch the sacred fire; thy house is desolate." Christianity is afterwards represented under the image of a pure and heaven-descending temple, embracing the whole human race. Words could not be more obnoxious to the Heathen than these, exciting at once their general indignation and hate!

superior to the vulgar superstition. It has probably been asked, "Did he authorize, by any new edict, a general and systematic persecution, or did he only give free scope to the vengeance of the awe-struck people, and countenance the timid or fanatic concessions of the provincial Governors to the riotous demand of the populace for Christian blood? Did he actually repeal or suspend, or only neglect to enforce, the milder edicts of his predecessors, which secured to the Christians a fair and public trial before the legal tribunal?"* An answer will be found in the sequel. For the vulgar arts of magic, divination, and vaticination, the Emperor openly declared a sovereign contempt, yet, in times of calamity, when the public mind was excited and alternately depressed, besides having recourse to certain temple ceremonies, he had intercourse with dealers in the secrets of futurity, and lent a listening ear to the prognostications of the Chaldeans, and to calculations of astrology. From the time of Domitian, the clemency of the Emperors had occasionally led them to interpose in some degree between the Christians and the rage of their enemies; but under the philosophic Marcus the affairs of the church assumed a different aspect. There is but little doubt that the Emperor speedily issued an edict by which the Christians were again exposed to all the denunciations of common informers, whose zeal was now whetted by some share, if not by the whole, of the confiscated property of the accused. The much-applauded provision in the rescript of Trajan, which, if inconsistent, was at least humane in its inconsistency, was in effect disregarded: the Christians were now sought after, encouragement was given to every description of *delatores*, the evidence of slaves and of children† was taken against them, and unheard-of measures were adopted to compel them to abjure the faith of Christ. Many of the most distinguished Christians of the east were sacrificed to the basest passions, of the lowest and most degraded of mankind, by the Emperor, who, with every moral qualification to appreciate the new religion, doggedly closed his ears, either in the stern apathy of Stoical philosophy, or in the more popular, yet more engrossing, hallucinations of heathen bigotry. From one writer, part of whose production is extant on the pages of the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius,

* Milman's History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 175.

† "During the continuance of the persecution under Marcus Aurelius, many of the Christians were thrown into prison; but owing to few coming forward as accusers, and proving them to have committed some sort of crime, the hands of the Magistrates were completely tied up with regard to them. By way, therefore, of obtaining an ostensibly legal sanction for the gratification of their malice, the soldiers and other enemies of the Christians prevailed, by means of threats, on certain of the servants of those whom they had apprehended, to become accusers of their masters. But what these wretches charged their masters with, was not sacrilege, or the contempt of the public religion, but actual crimes, and those identical crimes too, which, under the reign of Marcus, were, by slander, attributed to the Christians; namely, the celebrating of Thyestean banquets, and incestuous sexual intercourse. To this testimony of servants against their lords the Judges gave credit, or rather pretended to give credit; and, in defiance of the order of proceeding prescribed by the law, put the Christians to the rack; endeavouring, by torments of various kinds, to extort from them a confession of whatever they were thus charged with. In vain was it that these unfortunate people persisted, with the utmost constancy to the last, in asserting themselves innocent: their fate had been predetermined on; they were pronounced guilty, and were in consequence consigned over to various kinds of death."(Mosheim's Commentaries, vol. ii., p. 66.)

we learn, that so entirely had Marcus withdrawn the protection of the laws from the Christians, that their enemies, taking advantage of his decrees, attacked them both by day and by night, and robbed, and otherwise injured, the most inoffensive persons. "If we are thus treated," says he, "by your command," (Marcus Aurelius,) "let these things be done rightly; for a just Monarch should counsel nothing unjustly; and we willingly bear the gift of such a death. This only we beg of thee, that you would yourself first examine the men who appear endowed with such a life of strife, and that you would justly determine whether they are worthy of death and persecution, or of safety and tranquillity. But if this counsel and new decree, which ought not to have been issued even against hostile barbarians, be not yours, much more we do beseech you not to suffer us to be exposed any longer to daily violence."*

The student in Ecclesiastical History cannot fail to discover some difficulty in reconciling the professedly humane character of Marcus Aurelius toward others, and his high character as a philosopher, with the violent animosity which marked the proceedings of his government with regard to the Christians. The difficulty is not insuperable. Like other philosophers of that day, the Emperor was the victim of a superstition, which the example and instruction of his mother fostered, and which no philosophy removed. He considered the observance of pagan rites absolutely needful to secure national prosperity, as well as victory in the field; and, therefore, philosopher as he was, he observed the practices of the heathen worship with a minuteness which excited the ridicule and contempt of the Heathen themselves. The conjecture is not unreasonable, that, from the representation of the philosophers, to whose guidance he appears to have surrendered himself, he was led to regard the Christians as a race of absurd, irrational, and conceited men; and, therefore, on the principles of that severe and rigid system of moral discipline which he had embraced, he considered it expedient to destroy, rather than to tolerate, them. The true reason, we imagine, lies deeper. The nature of the Gospel is not only separate and distinct from the careless and licentious vice, but also from the whole religion, of the pagan philosophers, by which we imply the religion which has been framed from natural and self-devised sources, either in opposition to, or in neglect of, the revealed word of God, and the influence of the Holy Spirit, applying that word to the heart of man. In all ages it will be found, that the more strenuously men support such a religion, the more vehemently they oppose Christianity. Their religion is that of pride and self-importance: it denies the fallen condition of man, the provision and efficacy of divine grace, the work of the Redeemer, and the glory of God. The enmity that is forthwith occasioned is obvious, in which Marcus Aurelius fully participated. He carried his self-sufficiency to the highest points; he fancied that he had God within him: like most of the philosophers, he held the doctrine of the Το εν, but he held it in all its detestable impiety and arrogance. With him, to be good and virtuous was the easiest thing in the world: it

* Melito, Bishop of Sardis. Quoted by Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. iv., cap. 26.

was only to follow nature, and to obey the dictates of the deity, man's own soul, which was divine and self-sufficient. He could not with these views be humble, nor pray earnestly, nor feel his own internal wickedness and misery, nor discover the necessity of a Saviour and a Mediator. Had he contented himself with imitating the conduct of Antoninus Pius, who made no great pretensions to the religion of the Pagans, the benevolence of his nature, especially if aided by an equally sound understanding, might have led him to have respected the excellent character and virtues of his Christian subjects, and, instead of inflicting pains and penalties upon them, have thrown around them the imperial shield of powerful protection. But the pride of Stoical philosophy had received a wound, not easily healed. Whoever has marked the spirit which breathes throughout his "Meditations,"* and compared them with the doctrines of the Gospel, must acknowledge, that they are utterly distinct, and will not be surprised to learn, that the Christians experienced, from a serious and indomitable Stoic, what might only have been inflicted by an abandoned and flagitious Nero.† If this be the true state of the case, the philosophic spirit, however differently modified in different ages, will always be inimical to the Gospel; and the best of moralists, so called, will generally be found in co-operation with the most heartless and cruel.‡

Marcus Aurelius had not long been seated on the throne, before the demon of persecution stalked throughout the empire, scattering desolation and blood. The idol-Priests, the proud but cruel philosophers of the Portico, and the clamours of the multitude for adequate propitiation to the tutelar deities, to assuage and remove the fearful calamities which had spread through the length and breadth of the land, in the estimation of the Emperor, seemed to demand a sanguinary offering; and he was not long in presenting it. Among those who suffered for the name of Christ, was Felicitas, a Roman lady of illustrious birth, and of great Christian fortitude: she was a widow, and, when called to give testimony to her faith, she had seven sons, all of whom had embraced the truth, and were ornaments to the Christian profession. She had for some time anticipated martyrdom; and by her conversation with her children, led them also to expect it. As the empire had been severely visited with earthquakes, famine,

* Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, the Roman Emperor. His Meditations concerning himself: treating of a natural Man's Happiness: wherein it consisteth, and of the Means to attain unto it. Translated out of the originall Greeke, with Notes. By Meric Casaubon, B. of D., and Prebendaire of Christ Church, Canterbury. 4to. London, 1634.

† "Marcus Antoninus the philosopher, whom most writers extol immoderately for his wisdom and virtue, did not indeed repeal the decree of his father, and the other laws of the preceding Emperors; but he listened too much to the enemies of the Christians, and especially to the philosophers, who accused them of the most horrid crimes, and particularly of impiety, of Thyestean feasts, and Œdipodean incest. Hence no Emperor, after the reign of Nero, caused greater evils and calamities to light on Christians than this eminently wise Marcus Aurelius; nor was there any Emperor, under whom more Apologies for the Christians were drawn up, of which those by Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, and Tatian are still extant."

‡ The History of the Church of Christ. By the Rev. Joseph Milner. Vol. i. Containing the first Three Centuries. Cent. ii., cap. iv., pp. 223, 224. 8vo. York, 1794.

war, and inundations, the idolatrous Priests, hating the Christians and their religion, and especially Felicitas,* on account of her rank and station in society, represented to the Emperor, that they were the cause of all the disasters, and that the gods would not be appeased unless she and her sons were compelled to abjure Christianity, and sacrifice to the national idols. This was sufficient to arrest the attention of the philosopher. The Emperor immediately commanded them to be seized, and ordered Publius, the Governor, to take those proceedings by which the anger of the deities might be softened, either by the change of their religion, or by their death. The Magistrate resolved first to interrogate Felicitas, judging, that if he could exercise an influence over her, her example would influence her children: therefore, on the day previous to their trial, he sent for the matron, and endeavoured by civil speeches, and a feigned concern for the consequences which a refusal of the Emperor's proposals might probably induce, to engage her compliance; but finding her inexorable, he altered his tone, and, in unmistakable language, gave her to understand, that she must either obey or die. Unintimidated by the fear of death, she assured him that the Holy Spirit would not suffer her to be overcome by the power of the devil. For, said she, "If I survive this trial of my constancy, I shall be victorious; but I shall conquer still more gloriously if I perish under your hand." Publius, staggered at the resolution she displayed, mentioned her children, and requested her to consider their situation, if she had no regard for her own. To which she replied, "That they would certainly live if they persevered in the worship of the true God, and an abhorrence of idolatry; but the crime to which they were solicited would assuredly bring upon them eternal death."† She was then removed.

On the following morning Publius ascended the tribunal, and commanded Felicitas and her sons to be brought before him. He then addressed the mother in the presence of the young men, and told her, that if she were then as indifferent to life as she appeared to be on the preceding day, she ought at least to exercise some compassion for her offspring, whose youth and rank promised future service in the commonwealth. To which she answered, that what he urged as a mark of her affection, was the strongest proof that she could give of the want of it; and that the compassion which he recommended would entitle her justly to the character of the most cruel of parents. Then, looking upon her sons, she exhorted them

* Ruinart in "Acta Primorum Martyrum sincera et selecta," supposes that these martyrs suffered under Antoninus Pius, A.D. 160, and in the thirteenth year of his reign, who, as Tertullian certifies, put several Christians to death whilst he was Governor of Asia. We prefer adopting the chronological data of Tillemont.

† Publius itaque Præfectus Urbis jussit eam privatim adduci; et blando colloquis ad sacrificium eam provocans, minabatur pœnarum interitum. Cui Felicitas dixit; Nec blandimentis tuis resolvi potero, nec terroribus tuis frangi. Habeo enim Spiritum Sanctum, qui me non permittit vinci a diabolo; et ideo secura sum, quia viva te superabo; et si interfecta fuero, melius te vincam occisa. Publius dixit, Misera, si tibi suave est mori, vel filios tuos fac vivere. Felicitas respondit: Vivent filii mei, si non sacrificaverint idolis: si vero hoc tantum scelus admiserint, in æternum ibunt interitum. (Ruinart, Acta Martyr.)

to direct their eyes to heaven, where the Lord Jesus was waiting to receive them, to contend boldly for the faith, and to maintain their integrity. Indignant at this proceeding, Publius directed one of the bystanders to strike her on the face, at the same time reproving her temerity for talking thus to him, and for daring to encourage her children to disobey the Sovereign. Placing her on one side, he commenced interrogating the young men. To the eldest, Januarius, he offered promises of reward, and immediate preferment in the state, if he would abjure Christianity, and threatened most cruel torments if he refused. The young man assured him that his offers were useless, and hoped that God would give him grace to endure to the end. For this reply, he was scourged and cast into prison. The second son, whose name was Felix, was called, who, following the example of his elder brother, met with a similar fate. Philip, the third, was then brought to the bar, and told, that it was the Emperor's order, that he should sacrifice to the gods of the empire. He replied, that those deities were no gods, but empty idols void of all understanding. Publius would now be able to form an opinion of the remaining four,* whom he concluded, by similar investigation, to possess the same principles, and equal firmness in maintaining them. They were then remanded until the Emperor's pleasure should be known.

This was not delayed. Publius took the first opportunity of laying the examination of Felicitas and her sons before Marcus Aurelius, who, like a Stoic and a philosopher, immediately ordered them all to be put to death. With refined cruelty, he committed them to four different Judges, who should subject them to different tortures. Januarius, the eldest, was beaten to death with *plumbatæ*, † or whips, laden with plummets of lead: Felix and Philip had their brains beaten out with clubs. Silvanus was cast headlong from a precipice. Alexander, Vitalis, and Martial, were beheaded; and, finally, Felicitas suffered the same fate by the same sword. Well, indeed, has Gregory I. observed, with regard to this martyr, that "having seven children, she was as much afraid of leaving them behind her on earth, as other mothers are of surviving theirs. She was more than a martyr; for seeing her seven children martyred before her eyes, she was in some sort a martyr in each. She was the eighth in order of time, but was from the first to the last in pain, and began her martyrdom in the eldest, which she only finished in her own death. She received a crown, not only for herself, but likewise for all her children. Seeing them in torments, she remained constant, feeling their pains by nature as their mother, but rejoicing for them in her

* Ruinart, Acta Martyr. sincera et selecta, fol. p. 27.

† The *plumbatæ* consisted of balls of lead or brass, connected by chains of iron; and are often mentioned as instruments of torture in the Theodosian code, and also by Prudentius:—

> Tundatur, inquit, terga crebris ictibus,
> Plumboque cervix verberata extuberet.
>
> Hymn. x. S. Romani, v. 116.

Some were discovered in the tomb of a martyr, in the pontificate of Benedict XIII., and are preserved in the museum of the Vatican. (Prudent. Arevel, tom. ii., p. 1073.)

heart by hope. Let us be covered with shame and confusion, that we should fall so far short of the virtue of this martyr, and suffer our passions still to triumph over faith in our hearts. Often one word spoken against us disturbs our minds; at the least blast of contradiction we are discouraged or provoked; but neither torments nor death were able to shake her courageous soul. We weep without ceasing when God requires of us the children he hath lent us; and she bewailed her children when they did not die for Christ, and rejoiced when she saw them die." *

It was also in the early part of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, that Ptolemæus and Lucius suffered on account of their Christian confession. The details are related in one of the Apologies of Justin. "A certain woman had a husband that was intemperate. She herself had also previously led a dissolute life; but after she was made acquainted with the doctrines of Christ, she became modest, and endeavoured to persuade her husband also to lead a virtuous life, presenting to his mind the truths of Christianity, and the punishment of eternal fire awaiting those that would not live soberly, and according to right reason; but he still continuing in the same lascivious habits, wholly alienated his wife's affections by his practices. Finally, the woman considering it wicked to live with one who, contrary to the law of nature and propriety, was intent upon every course to gratify his lusts, contemplated a divorce. But when she was advised by her friends to remain with him, in hope of his reformation, she did violence to herself, and remained. Afterwards, however, her husband, who had gone to Alexandria, was reported to be acting much worse. Fearing, therefore, lest she should become a sharer in his unrighteousness and impieties, if she continued united to him, and should be his companion, she sent him what is called the bill of divorce, and was separated. This man, however, who ought to have rejoiced that his wife, who had formerly delighted in debauchery, and all manner of vice, had now ceased from those deeds in which she had formerly wantonly engaged with servants and hirelings, and that she now wished him, also, to cease from the same things, not only refused to do thus, but brought an accusation against her, asserting that she was a Christian. And, she delivered," says Justin, "to you, the Emperor, a petition, requesting that she might first be permitted to regulate her domestic affairs, and then she would make her defence in reference to the accusation. And this you granted. But he, who had formerly been the husband of the woman, not being able to say anything against her now, turned upon a certain Ptolemy, whom Urbicius had punished, and who had become her instructor in the principles of Christianity, in the following manner:—

* To the above account is also to be added: "Praxedes, a blessed virgin, the daughter of a citizen of Rome, who was so brought up in the doctrine of Christ, and so affected to his religion, that she, with her sister Patentiana, (Baronius says, Pudentiana, Ann. 165, sect. 3,) bestowed all her patrimony upon the relieving of poor Christians, giving all her time to fasting and prayer, and to the burying of the bodies of martyrs. And after she had made free all her family, with her servants after the death of her sister, she also departed, and was buried in peace." (Foxe's Acts and Monuments, vol. i., p. 127. 8vo. edit.)

"He had persuaded the Centurion to seize Ptolemy his friend, and cast him into prison, and to ask him only this,—whether he were a Christian? Ptolemy, who was a lover of truth, and averse to all deceit and falsehood, confessed himself a Christian; in consequence of which, he was incarcerated, and punished by the Centurion in this way for a long time. At last when the man came before Urbicius in like manner, only this one thing was asked, whether he were a Christian? And as he was conscious of deriving every happiness and blessing from the doctrine of Christ, he again professed the principles of divine virtue: for he that denies that he is a Christian, either denies because he despises, or because he is conscious that he is unworthy of this religion, and a stranger to its excellency; and thus avoids the confession. Neither of these things can apply to the true Christian. Urbicius, however, having commanded him to be led forth 'to torture and to death,' a certain Lucius, who was also a Christian, seeing the judgment so unjustly passed, says to Urbicius, 'What charge is this, that you should punish one who is neither an adulterer, nor fornicator, nor a murderer, nor a thief, nor a robber, nor convicted, indeed, of any crime, but simply confessing the name of a Christian? O Urbicius, you do not judge what becomes our pious Emperor, nor the philosophic son of Cæsar, nor the sacred Senate.' But, without any other reply, he said to Lucius, 'Thou appearest also to be one such as these;' and as Lucius answered, 'By all means,' he in like manner commanded him to be led forth. But he, Lucius, said, he thanked him; 'for now,' he added, 'he was liberated from wicked masters, and was going to the good Father and King, even God.' A second and a third coming up, were punished in the same way." *

The tragical event thus recorded stimulated Justin to write his second Apology. The date of this document, like that of other events connected with the history of Justin, has been much contested; but Eusebius expressly states it to have been addressed to M. Aurelius, and L. Verus, by which he may have meant that it was written during their reign; and since Justin appears to address only one Emperor, we may perhaps ascribe his second Apology to the period when Verus was absent on his eastern campaigns; that is, to some time between the years 161 and 165.† From a contemporary

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. iv., cap. 17. Henry of Herford, says Foxe, recordeth, out of the Martyrology of Isuardus, of one Concordius, a Minister of the city of Spoleto, who, in the reign of this Antoninus Verus, because he would not sacrifice unto Jupiter, but did spit in the face of the idol, after divers and sundry punishments sustained, at last with the sword was beheaded. Isuardus and Bede, Vincentius and Henry of Herford, with other authors more, make relation of divers martyrs that, by sundry kinds of torments, were put to death under the aforesaid Emperor; the names of whom be Symmetrius, Florellus, Pontian, Alexander, Caius, Epipodius, Victor, Corona, Marcellus, and Valerian. The cause of whose martyrdom was the reprehending of idolatry, and because, at the Emperor's commandment, they would not sacrifice to idols. Many sorts of punishment and miracles are told of them; but at length the end of them all is this, that they were beheaded. (Acts and Monuments, vol. i., p. 129.)

† We cannot form an opinion with certainty respecting the date of the second or shorter Apology. But no well-founded doubt exists, that this document was prepared under the reign of the Emperors Marcus Aurelius, and Lucius Verus, and therefore, between years 161—166. Eusebius, with whom Jerome, Photius, and others, agree,

document we learn that edicts were issued about this time in different countries, by which the Christians were ordered to sacrifice to the gods, or to suffer capitally. The edict is said to have been issued by the Emperor; * but Tertullian says, that no law was enacted against the Christians by Marcus Aurelius. This appears contradictory; nevertheless, the philosophers, the Priests, or an excited rabble, might all, in their turn, be the cause of much cruelty. Occasionally they would unite their efforts; and in such cases there was but little need of an Emperor's edict or permission to shed the blood of men who were accused of disrespect to the gods, as well as to the Emperor. Crescens, a Cynical philosopher, was able to gratify his malice by putting many Christians to death; and this was, perhaps, only one instance, out of many, where the philosophers stood up as defending the national religion against the inroads of Christianity. Justin appealed in his Apology to the Emperor against these barbarities; and though it cannot be denied, that the laws had been violated without the Emperor taking any notice, Dr. Burton infers, that Justin did not suspect him personally of originating the persecution. When applied to in particular cases, he may have allowed a Magistrate to act with severity, or he may have sent an answer which was construed more harshly than he intended; but at this time he had probably published no general edict by which the Christians were placed in a worse condition than before; and the fact of his allowing them, under certain restrictions, to hold office, is a proof that at some period at least he was inclined to do them justice. Political privileges were not what the Christians wanted. They desired immunity from atrocious calumnies, and from the fury of the people, who clamoured for their blood. The Emperor either could not, or would not, protect them from these outrages. Such at least was the situation in which the Christians were placed.†

The first thing that arrests our attention, that is peculiar in the nature of the persecutions of this time, is, that inquisition for Christians was ordered by the laws, although the fury of the populace frequently outstripped the legal proceedings of public functionaries. According to the edict of Trajan, no such inquisition was to be made; but now, on the contrary, the Christians were eagerly sought for, and were often obliged to escape by hiding themselves, as appears from the several accounts of the persecutions, and from the expressions of Celsus, one of the most inveterate adversaries with whom Christianity has had to contend. Up to this time the treatment they had experienced was this: the Christians who were accused, and

distinctly asserts this; and the grounds on which Valerius, Dodwell, and Neander think themselves justified in placing the composition of this Apology in the reign of the Emperor Antoninus Pius, are either unimportant, or are in favour of the contrary opinion. After all, the precise date of the second Apology must remain undetermined. (Semisch's Life, Writings, and Opinions of Justin Martyr, vol. i., p. 81; Biblical Cabinet, vol. xli.)

* The Acts of Justin's Martyrdom. The edict is given at length in the Passio S. Symphoriani Martyris, Ruinart, Acta Martyr. sincera et selecta, p. 79, *et seq.* Fol.

† Burton's Lectures on Eccles. Hist., lect. xviii., vol. ii., p. 129. 8vo. edit. Oxford, 1833.

would not, after repeated requests, abjure their faith, were executed with the application of torture. It was now attempted to force the Christians to recant by the same means. The edict to which we have already referred, and is still extant under the name of the Emperor Aurelian,* which, as Pagi and Ruinart suspect, stands for Aurelius, coincides exactly with this account; and, as it bears every mark of genuineness in its language and matter, it is not improbable that it may be the very edict sent by this Emperor to the Governors of the provinces. It runs thus:—"We have heard that the laws are violated by those who, in our times, call themselves Christians. Seize these people; and if they refuse to sacrifice to our gods, punish them with various kinds of torments, in such a manner, however, that justice be mingled with your severity, and that the vengeance of the law remain satisfied with extirpating the crime." This last addition suits exactly the character of Aurelius: the Governors were to look steadfastly at the aim he had in view; namely, to crush Christianity, which was at variance with the state religion, and to lead back the people to the worship of the Roman gods; but they were not to give themselves up to the dictates of blind passion. The caution might be humane enough; but it was totally insufficient to restrain men from cruel and arbitrary measures.†

Justin was not long permitted to survive the appearance of his second Apology. He was a remarkable man. To him the whole extent of Heathenism was familiar, both in its depth and height, in its mythological superstition, and in its refined and lofty speculations; for he was both a scholar and a philosopher. He was born at Flavia Neapolis, a town which occupied the place of Sichem, the old capital of Samaria. It received its name in honour of Flavius Vespasian, the Emperor, who colonized it with Greeks, and thus made it one of those heathen towns with which both the Romans and the Herods had found it expedient to bridle that ever-restless country. His father's name was Priscus, a Gentile; and, according to Scaliger, one

* This edict which is preserved in the Acta Symphoriani, is thus expressed in the original:—"Aurelianus imperator omnibus administratoribus suis atque rectoribus. Comperimus ab his, qui se temporibus nostris Christianos dicunt, legum præcepta violari. Hos comprehensos, nisi diis nostris sacrificaverint, diversis punite cruciatibus, quatenus habeat distinctio prolata justitiam et in resecandis ultio terminata jam finem." (Ruinart, Acta Martyr. selecta, &c. Fol. p. 80.) No aim appears likely to be answered by the forgery of such an edict: its language is the official language of the day, and its whole spirit breathes the Roman statesman, so that an unprejudiced person can scarcely believe it spurious. If it belong to the time of Aurelianus, whose name it bears, the martyr, in whose history it stands, must have died in his reign. But it is difficult to believe, that under this Emperor they proceeded to shed Christian blood. Also the manner in which it speaks of Christians, as not then being an old sect, appears to suit the time of Aurelius better than that of Aurelianus, in which the Christian sect had so long openly existed. Also the accusation against the Christians, that the exercise of their religion was a violation of the laws of the state, could hardly be brought forward under the Emperor Aurelian; for Christianity, in that case, had been recognised as a *religio licita* fifteen years when this edict appeared. Most undoubtedly, therefore, we must read "Aurelius," instead of "Aurelianus," two names which are constantly interchanged. Lucius Aurelius Commodus was favourable to the Christians, and, therefore, he is out of the question: it suits no one but the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. (Neander's History.)

† Neander's History of the Christian Religion and Church, vol. i., p. 105.

of those Greeks who were transplanted to that colony, and who was careful, with religion, to educate his son in all the learning and philosophy of the Gentile world. In his younger years he travelled into foreign parts for the benefit of his studies, and particularly into Egypt, the theatre of all the more mysterious and recondite parts of polity and religion, and therefore constantly visited by all the more grave and sober philosophers among the Heathen. That he visited Alexandria, we know from his own writings,* where he informs us of the statements he received concerning the translators of the Septuagint, and that he was shown the cells where they accomplished that elaborate and renowned work: it was in that city he also became acquainted with the principal systems which then engaged the attention both of scholars and theologians. At the commencement of his "Dialogue with Trypho the Jew," he describes the hopes which he entertained from the study of philosophy, and the disappointments in which his highly-raised expectations issued, till, in the Christian faith, he found that certainty and truth which had been the constant aim of his inquiries. Justin, therefore, had to choose his party, as Josephus had his sect. Consequently, with the generality of the young men of his age, he ran the round of the principal schools, not only without finding satisfaction, but also with the experience of no little disgust. He sought his first instructor in a master of the Stoic school; but after staying with him a long time, and finding that he made no advance toward the knowledge of God, he left him, and betook himself to a Peripatetic; but this professor of superior wisdom within a few days sickened him by an exhibition of earthly prudence in impatiently asking him to settle the terms.† Justin left him, and went to a noted Pythagorean, to see if he could procure from him the peculiar and excellent gift which philosophy promises. But, alas! our inquirer found himself unqualified at the outset: he had failed to bring with him that knowledge of music, astronomy, and geometry, which this system considered as fundamental. Again Justin was, emphatically, *at sea*. He then determined to attach himself to a Platonic, with whose intellectual notions he was highly enraptured; and resolved for some time to give himself up to solitude and contemplation.

Numerous instances now took place which operated in leading Justin to judge favourably of Christianity. Palestine was cruelly

* Justini Ad Diognetum Epistola. Folio, cap. xi.

† Covetousness was a crying sin among the philosophers. Tatian, in his address to the Greeks, says, "So far are your philosophers from practising the self-contentment which they recommend to others, that some of them receive from the Emperor a yearly pension of six hundred aurei, for no better reason than they may be well paid for the length of their beards." Lucian gives a fearful description of the corrupt morals of the philosophers of his day, and paints them to the life:—"A race of men have lately made their appearance, idle, contentious, vain, irritable, lickerish, empty-headed, inflated, overflowing with insolence, appropriating the honourable name of virtue, raising their eye-brows, and stroking their beards, they gad about, concealing their abominable propensities under this assumed garb. Before their disciples they are for ever lauding self-restraint and temperance, and pouring contempt on wealth and pleasure; but alone, and in their own practice, who can describe their voracity, their lewdness, their eagerness to lay hold of every dirty *obolus* that comes in their way?" (Lucian, Icaromenip, cap. xxix.)

ravaged by the rebellion of the impostor Barcochebas. The Christians suffered much from the pretender, in not acknowledging him to be their Christ, and from the heathen populace as his supporters. He had an opportunity of seeing the singular and calumniated class of men who "had turned the world upside down." When he saw them fearless against death, and all other terrors, he thought it impossible that they could lead a vicious and a sensual life. For what man that was a lover of pleasure, licentious, and a feeder on human flesh, would welcome death, so as to be deprived of his enjoyments? Would he not rather endeavour, by all means, ever to live this life, and escape the notice of the Magistrate? Justin was acquainted with the fearful punishment which was inflicted upon the Jews by the Romans, and must have been deeply affected with the novel and horrible spectacle at the great annual fair at Terebinth, when a whole nation was sold into slavery like beasts! The disturbed state of affairs probably led him to remove to Cæsarea, the head-quarters of the Roman Governor. Wrapt in contemplations, to which the Platonic philosophy had conducted him, he wandered to a spot not far from the sea. His solitude was interrupted by the appearance of a venerable old man,* of meek, but dignified, deportment. A conversation commenced, in which Justin speedily displayed the selfish and worthless spirit which ever inspires the "wisdom of this world." The old man warned him against the fallacy of resting his hopes on any system taught by the philosophers, and directed him to study the Hebrew Prophets, and the doctrines of Christianity, and to pray with earnestness, that light might be given him to understand these things, which could only be comprehended by the assistance of God himself, and the Saviour. Having thus spoken, the stranger went his way, and Justin saw him no more. His words, however, were as "a nail" fastened "in a sure place:" they kindled a flame in his heart which nothing could extinguish. He attentively revolved the information he had received; he seized with eagerness the writings of the Prophets; he anxiously sought the acquaintance of those persons who were known by him to be the friends of Christ; and the result of this threefold effort was, his passing over to the Christian church.† The quickness with which this transition was made, cannot be thought strange, if we consider that his attachment to Heathenism depended almost entirely on his faith in the truth and rectitude of certain philosophical tenets, especially of Platonism. This illusion once broken up, the last ties were snapped asunder, which had hitherto kept him from joining the Christian community.

* Numerous conjectures have been entertained respecting this venerable personage. Halloix is doubtful whether this aged man might not be an incarnate angel, but at last decides in favour of the opinion, that he might be one of the saints living at that time, who was brought to this interview with Justin by a divine impulse, or, rather, by the actual guidance of an angel. Tillemont considers the first supposition highly probable. Ziegler supposes that the old man was a hermit. Zastran thinks he must have been a philosophically educated Jewish Christian; and Fabricius, that he was Polycarp of Smyrna.

† It is worthy of notice that the study of the Old Testament, and especially of the Prophets, was the means of leading to the Christian faith, Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, and Hilary.

For some time before, Christianity had exerted a silent influence over him, and had been imperceptibly winning his heart. The intrepidity and cheerfulness with which Christians maintained their faith under all the tortures which the rage and cruelty of their heathen adversaries were ready to inflict upon them, the ready determination with which they met death itself, for their profession, had impressed him with the conviction that it could not consist with the secret vices and crimes of which the Christians were accused; since self-indulgence, and joy in the prospect of death, form the most direct antipodes.*

The church in Cæsarea probably had the privilege of receiving into her bosom this convert. He was by no means backward in exhibiting the fruits of her instruction. He addressed the Gentiles in a written oration; and "could we be sure," says Mr. Evans, "that this is the same with that which has come down to us under the title of 'A hortatory Address to the Greeks,' there would not be a more interesting document in the whole range of ecclesiastical literature. It would be the first address extant that was made to the Heathen, after the speeches of Paul in the Acts of the Apostles; and would discover to us the points in which Justin felt dissatisfaction with heathen philosophy, as also wherein he knew the pagan system to be most assailable. Thus it would bear a very different character from any previous Christian writing. After having been all along in the company of saints, Prophets, and Apostles, we feel a sudden surprise at being thus introduced to an assembly of heathen gods and philosophers; and some have even recoiled as at the entrance of a pagan temple, not considering that our guide is leading us not to worship, but to disperse and destroy." † It appears that the wiser and more considerate part of the Gentiles were not a little perplexed at the loss of so useful and eminent a person, and professed great astonishment at the change which had taken place. For their satisfaction and edification, he wrote the Exhortation alluded to, and in the very first words addresses them thus: "Think not, O ye Greeks, that I have rashly, and without any judgment or deliberation, departed from the rites of your religion; for I could find nothing in it really sacred, and worthy of the divine acceptance. The matters among you, as your poets have ordered them, are monuments of nothing but madness and intemperance; and a man can no sooner apply himself, even to the most learned among you for instruction, but he shall be entangled in a thousand difficulties, and become the most confused individual in the world." ‡ He then proceeds, with a considerable degree of wit and eloquence, to expose the folly and absurdity of the foundation of the pagan creed, and concludes his address as follows:— "Come hither, O ye Greeks, and partake of a most incomparable wisdom, and be instructed in a divine religion, and acquaint yourselves with an immortal King. Become as I am; for I sometime was as you are. These are the arguments that prevailed with me; this

* Semisch's Life, Writings, and Opinions of Justin Martyr. Translated by J. E. Ryland; Biblical Cabinet, vol. xli., p. 17.

† Evans's Biography of the Early Church, p. 137.

‡ Justini Opera, Oratio ad Græcos, p. 37. Folio. Paris, 1636.

the efficacy and divinity of the doctrine, which, like a skilful charm, expels all corrupt and poisonous affections out of the soul, and banishes that lust which is the fountain of all evil, whence enmities, strifes, envy, emulations, anger, and such-like mischievous passions, do proceed; which being once driven out, the soul presently enjoys a pleasant calmness and tranquillity. And being delivered from the yoke of evils that before lay upon its neck, it aspires and mounts up to its Creator; it being but suitable that it should return to that place from whence it borrowed its original." *

Justin did not suffer himself to be hidden in provincial obscurity. We have to follow him to the capital of the empire, where he arrived clad in his philosopher's garb,† which he retained to the last; considering himself still a philosopher, but of the only true philosophy, and professing himself a teacher, not of human wisdom, but of the divine word. The new faith, to which in so remarkable a manner he had been led, from this moment became the mainspring and centre-point of all his efforts. To the edification of the church of Christ, both inwardly and outwardly, his life was henceforward dedicated. It was his desire that the light which had risen on his own mind should shine also on others; that the repose and peace which he had found, might also make others happy. Justin considered himself laid under a religious obligation to devote himself to the immediate, incessant propagation of the Gospel. He expressly declares, "that he that can speak in defence of the truth, and does not, shall receive the sentence of condemnation."‡ "It is, therefore, through fear

* Justini Opera, Oratio ad Græcos, p. 40. folio, 1636; Cave's Lives of the Fathers, vol. i., p. 235, edit. 8vo., Oxford, 1840.

† "Though he laid aside his former profession, he still retained his ancient garb, as Eusebius, and after him Hierom reports, preaching and defending the Christian religion under his old philosophic habit, which was the *pallium*, or 'cloak,' the usual badge of the Greek philosophers, (different from that which was worn by the ordinary Greeks,) and which those Christians still kept to, who before their conversion had been professed philosophers. So Hierom tells us of Aristides, the Athenian philosopher, contemporary with Quadratus, that under his former habit he became Christ's disciple; and Origen of Heraclas, afterwards Bishop of Alexandria, that, giving up himself to the more strict study of philosophy, he put on the philosophic habit, which he constantly wore, even after he became Presbyter of that church. This custom continued long in the Christian community, that those who did enter upon an ascetic course of life, and a more severe profession of religion, always wore the philosopher's cloak; and he tells us of Silvanus, the rhetorician, that when he became Christian, and professed this ascetic life, he was the first that laid aside the cloak, and, contrary to custom, put on the common garb. Indeed, it was so common, that it became proverbial among the Heathen, when any Christian ascetic passed by, 'There goes a Greek impostor;' because of their being clad after the same manner, and professing a severer life than ordinary, like the philosophers among the Grecians, many of whom notwithstanding were mere cheats and hypocrites; and Hierom notes of his time, (Hieron. Opera, tom. iv., Epist. ad Marcellam, xix., p. 51, folio,) that if such a Christian were not so fine and spruce in his garb as others, presently the common saying was clapped upon him, 'He is an impostor, and a Greek.' This habit, it seems, was generally black, and sordid enough. Whence the Monks, who succeeded in this strict and regular course of life, are severely noted by the Gentile writers of those times under this character. Libanius calls them 'black-coat Monks,' and says of them, that the greatest demonstration of their virtue was, 'to walk about in mourning garments.' Much at the same rate Eunapius describes the Monks of Egypt, that they were clad in black, and were ambitious to go abroad in the most slovenly and sordid garb." (Cave's Lives of the Fathers, vol. i., p. 234, 8vo.)

‡ Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, sect lxxxiii. Translated by Henry Brown, M.A. P. 183. 8vo. Cambridge, 1846.

that we seek to converse with and convince men out of the Scriptures; and not for the love of money, or glory, or pleasure; for no one can justly accuse us of these vices." While at Rome, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, he undertook a confutation of the Marcionites, and others, who were then disturbing the peace of the church; and afterwards he addressed his celebrated Apology to the Emperor. The situation of the Christians, even in the days of the so-called benevolent Antonine, was by no means an enviable one. Pestilence and famine were desolating the empire, and the people, with the Priests and philosophers at their head, discovered the cause in the anger of the gods at the toleration of such enemies to them as the Christians. They were charged with awful crimes, and persecuted both by the sentence of the Magistrate, and by the riots of the mob. Justin boldly advanced to ward off the blow. The presentation of his defence of the church to the Emperor involved great personal danger, inasmuch as he professed himself a Christian to the Emperor's face, when the law of Trajan was still in force, which, though it forbade the Christians to be purposely sought after, yet inexorably adjudged them to death when they allowed themselves to be such. Good effect was produced. The pagan part of the population were by no means uninfluenced; and many waverers, who were on the point of passing over to the church, were confirmed in the truth; an object of greater importance in the estimation of Justin than any direct influence upon the higher powers. This useful service retained him some considerable time in the capital.

In the course of time Justin returned to the provinces. Having already contended for the faith with the Heathen and the heretic, he now entered the lists against the Jew. Hence his celebrated Dialogue with Trypho, a most learned man of that nation. This conference is supposed to have occupied two days; after which he sailed from Ephesus. How long he abode in the provinces, does not appear: it was not long before his duty called him to Rome. There the church was in sackcloth. Although Marcus Aurelius had issued no new edict against that hallowed community, he put them under a virtual excommunication, or outlawry. He withdrew his protecting arm, and left them, without defence, to the tender mercies of the tribunals, and of the people. These usual instruments of persecution were unfortunately put into dreadful energy from the rage and fear excited by the calamitous series of war, pestilence, and earthquake which pervaded his reign. The hostility of the Emperor's philosophy was also aggravated by that of his superstition. Miserable, indeed, was now the situation of the Christians. Their lives and their property were in jeopardy every moment throughout the empire. Other persecutions, if not local, had not been universal at one and the same moment, and a refuge was open, if not to the power, yet to the hope, of the sufferer. But now the whole empire was one place of execution, and cries for mitigation of their sufferings arose from every quarter.*

On the return of Justin to Rome he found an abundance of

* Evans's Biography of the Early Church, p. 152.

employment prepared for him. He had frequent contests with Crescens,* a philosopher, and of considerable notoriety at that time in the metropolis. "He was a Cynic, and, according to the genius of that sect, was proud and conceited, surly and ill-natured, a philosopher in appearance, but a notorious slave to all vice and wickedness. Tatian, the scholar of Justin, who saw the man at Rome, and despised him on account of his childish and trifling, his wanton and effeminate, manners, gives him this character, that he was the traducer of all their gods, the epitome of superstition, the accuser of generous and heroic actions, the subtle contriver of murders, the prompter of adultery, a pursuer of wealth even to rage and madness, a tutor of the vilest sort of lust, and the great engine and instigator of persons being condemned to execution; he tells us, that, when at Rome, he was, above all others, miserably enslaved to unnatural crimes, and covetousness; and though he pretended to despise death, he abhorred it; to which, as the greatest evil, he sought to betray Justin and Tatian, for their reproofs of the vicious and degenerate lives of those philosophical impostors. This was the adversary of

* The Cynic school in the second century of the Christian era was in the last stage of its decline. The various noble traits by which the earlier advocates of this philosophy, notwithstanding all their singularities, had been honourably distinguished, had almost entirely vanished in the later adherents of the school: the Cynics of the second century had barely retained the public side of their philosophy, and reduced even this to a caricature. Their outward appearance had in it something frightful. The *pallium* was carelessly thrown over one shoulder, and left one half of the body naked, their hair hung down long and shaggy, their nails were like the claws of wild beasts. Begrimed with dirt, girt with a large knapsack, in one hand a formidable cudgel, and in the other a book written on the back; they wandered about in swarms through the most frequented parts of populous cities. But this sordid, uncouth exterior was nothing in comparison with the internal abominations which went along with it. A fawning servility to gain the favour of the powerful, immeasurable vanity, an unrestrained fondness for detraction, a gluttonous appetite, insatiable avarice, and the most shameless unchastity, were the characteristic features of most Cynics. Religion and morality had in general, for them, only a relative value, as vehicles of vanity and self-interest. What wonder, then, if, to people of this class, the quiet dignity of the Christian conduct, the holy seriousness of Christian men and women, gave peculiar offence? What wonder, if, with all the irritation of a caste threatened in their reputation and influence, with all the turbulence of a conscience violently aroused, they attacked the professors of a new faith so dangerous to themselves? The philosopher Crescens at Rome was a microcosm of this degenerate Cynicism. Faithful to the character of his party, he made the Roman Christians the objects of his calumnies and slanders. Himself without religion, he indulged, to the delight of an applauding multitude, in hypocritical lamentations over the irreligiousness of Christians. It was natural that Justin, when, during his second residence at Rome, he became acquainted with the proceedings of this abandoned philosopher, should feel compelled to defend the Christians, by showing that the charges brought against them were utterly unfounded. He forced this boastful and hypocritical philosopher to a tacit admission of his ignorance and disingenuousness. He showed that Crescens was either totally unacquainted with the Christian doctrine which he slandered, or that, if made acquainted with it, he understood it not; or that, if he not only knew it, but had a perception of its excellence, he had been deterred by the fear of man from avowing this conviction. In every possible view, he satisfactorily proved that Crescens had no right to the title of a philosopher; that he was no more than an aspiring *charlatan*, to whom the praise of men was everything, and truth nothing. This bold language, of course, exasperated the Cynic to the highest degree, and Justin had everything to fear from his malice; for the revenge of a Cynic was as insatiable as his vanity. (Semisch's Life, Writings, and Opinions of Justin. See also Professor Tholuck, on the Nature and moral Influence of Heathenism, especially among the Greeks and Romans, viewed in the Light of Christianity; Student's Cabinet Library of useful Tracts, No. 40.)

Justin, a lover of popular applause, not of true wisdom and philosophy; and who, by all the base arts of insinuation, endeavoured to traduce the Christians, and to represent their religion under the most infamous character. But in all his disputes Justin found him wretchedly ignorant of the affairs of the people whom he maligned, and strongly biassed by malice and envy, which he offered to prove in a public disputation in the presence of the Emperor and the Senate, assuring them that either he had never considered the doctrines of Christianity, and then he was worse than the meanest idiots, who are not wont to bear witness and pronounce sentence in matters whereof they have no knowledge; or, if he had taken notice of them, it was plain that either he did not understand them, or, if he did, out of a base compliance with his auditors, dissembled his knowledge and approbation, for fear of being accounted a Christian, and lest, freely speaking his mind, he should fall under the sentence and the fate of Socrates; so far was he from the excellent principle of that wise man, that 'no man was to be regarded before the truth:' which free and impartial censure did but more exasperate him, the sooner to hasten and promote his ruin."*

There are recorded not less than six defences, or Apologies, which were put forth by the Christians during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, four of which survive the ravages of time to tell us the story of the atrocious calumnies and ill-treatment which they experienced. No sooner had Justin entered the city of Rome, than he, with a boldness worthy of the cause which he had espoused, placed himself in the front of danger, and presented a second Apology. The blood of three martyrs, put to death merely because they confessed themselves Christians, had recently been shed. It commences with a detailed example of the cruelties which the followers of Christ were suffering; and, in reply to certain unfeeling taunts which were cast upon the confessors as to "why God did not interfere to deliver the Christians, if he were indeed their helper? and why, if death were the way to God, they did not kill themselves, and save others the trouble?" he nobly vindicates the Most High, and his devoted followers. After showing the superior excellence of the Christian teaching, and illustrating the proof which their fortitude in torment and death gave to the innocence of their lives, by the effect which it had in his own conversion, he concludes. It is a mournful document. The sword and rack of persecution come before our eyes as we read it; and, like Paul's last letter, it contains a melancholy foreboding of his fast-approaching death. His notorious exertions in teaching, and the fame of his writings, had marked him out. But, above all, his having quitted the ranks of the philosophers roused the vengeance of that malignant class of men. Foremost of these was Crescens. He wallowed in iniquity. He was prepared both from heart and head to do his worst against the Christians. He had been most industrious in propagating calumnies against them, charging them with atheism and impiety. Justin had especially incurred his hatred, because he had publicly interrogated, and convicted him of

* Cave's Lives of the Fathers, vol. i., p. 241. 8vo. edit. Oxford.

utter ignorance of the question; and such an adversary was likely enough to be lashed into greater fury by the severe terms in which he was mentioned in Justin's last Apology. His machinations, his vain-glory, his ignorance, his viciousness of character, are there proclaimed to the whole empire. Under the philosopher Marcus Aurelius, the artifices of Crescens had full scope, and Justin soon found how speedily his purposes were accomplished.*

Justin was not unacquainted with the inveterate malice of Crescens, and frequently declared that the pride of the mortified philosopher would probably require his blood as an atonement; and, with somewhat of prophetic feeling, said, in his second Apology to the Emperor, "I expect to be plotted against, and fastened to the stake, by some one of those whom I have named, or, at least, by Crescens, that lover of noise and *braggadocio*, for the man is not worthy the name of philosopher." Crescens did not suffer Justin to be long in a state of suspense: he had constant access to Marcus Aurelius, whom it was no difficult task to prejudice against Justin, especially as he was so successful in promoting the interests of the religion of Christ. Crescens caused him to be cast into prison.† He was brought in company with five others before the tribunal of Rusticus,‡ the Prætorian Prefect. On being commanded, in the usual form, to worship the gods and obey the Emperors, he answered with a distinct profession of Christianity, which the interrogations of the Magistrate only caused him to repeat in greater detail. His companions were next questioned, and they made the same bold profession. The Prefect then turned to Justin, and asked, in what kind of learning and discipline he had been brought up. He said, that he had endeavoured to understand all kinds of discipline, and tried all methods of learning, but had finally taken his rest in the Christian discipline, how little soever it was esteemed by those who were led by error and false opinions. "Wretch that thou art," said Rusticus, "art thou then taken with that discipline?" "I am," replied the martyr; "for with right doctrine do I follow the Christians." And when asked what that doctrine was, he answered with simplicity and comprehensiveness, "We believe in one God, the original Creator and framer of all things, visible and invisible, who is not inclosed in any space, but, invisible as He is, fills heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ the Son of God, whom the Prophets announced beforehand, as a teacher of truth, and herald of salvation. Of his eternal Godhead

* Evans's Biography of the Early Church, p. 154.

† It is not improbable, though not absolutely certain, that Crescens was the prime instigator of Justin's martyrdom. Several of the Fathers have asserted that he was so. (See Euseb. Eccles. Hist., lib. iv., cap. 16; Hieron. de Viris Illust., cap. xxiii.)

‡ Q. Junius Rusticus, a man, says Cave, famous both for court and camp, a wise statesman, and great philosopher, peculiarly attached to the sect of the Stoics. He was tutor to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius; and what remarkable rules and instructions he had given him, Antoninus himself sets down at large. Above all his masters, he had a particular reverence and regard to him, communicated to him all his public and private counsels, showed him respect before all the great officers of the empire; and after his death required of the Senate that he might be honoured with a public statue. He had been Consul in the second year of Hadrian, and again in the second of the present Emperor, and was now Prefect of Rome. (See Julius Capitolinus in Vit. Marc. Aurel. Philosoph.)

I am not able in my weakness to speak satisfactorily: this is the function of a prophetic power, as likewise in truth Prophets in former ages prophesied of his becoming man." The Magistrate then inquired, where the Christians were accustomed to assemble. "Where they wish, and where they can," was Justin's firm and prudent reply: "do you think we always assemble in the same place? The God of the Christians is not confined within an enclosure; but as He is invisible, and fills heaven and earth, the faithful praise and adore him in every place." The Prefect then asked in what place Justin was accustomed to instruct his disciples; who forthwith gave him an account of the place where he dwelt, and that there he preached the truth to all that resorted to him. Rusticus then turned to those who had been apprehended with Justin, and their replies tending to the same end, he said to the martyr: "Hark, thou that hast the reputation of eloquence, and thinkest that thou holdest the truth; if thou shalt be scourged and beheaded, art thou persuaded that thou wilt go up into heaven?" He answered, that although he should suffer what the other had threatened, yet he hoped that he should enjoy the portion of all true Christians, well knowing that the divine grace and favour were laid up for all such, and should be as long as the world endured. To the jeering observation of the Magistrate, "Thou believest, then, in thy ascension to heaven when I have caused thee to be scourged and beheaded?" Justin answered with the distinctness of a soul full of faith, "I hope that I shall receive the gift of Christ's grace, when I have suffered that." The fresh inquiry of the Governor, whether he really thought that he should go to heaven, and be rewarded there, was met by Justin with a still more decisive declaration: "I not only think so, but I know it with a certainty that does not admit of a doubt." The patience of Rusticus was now exhausted; and seeing that it was to no purpose to argue any longer, he brought the matter to a conclusion, by saying, "Sacrifice, then, and obey, or I will order you to be tormented without mercy." This threatening, so far from daunting the accused, only made his courage rise higher. "No reasonable man," he replied, "will abjure godliness, and embrace impiety. It is through a cruel death that we hope and pray to be saved, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, since this will be our salvation, and means of confidence before the terrible and the universal tribunal of our God and Saviour." To the same purpose was the answer of the rest of the martyrs; adding, "Do what you will: we are Christians, and do not sacrifice to idols." Rusticus immediately pronounced the following sentence:—"They who refuse to sacrifice to the gods, and to obey the imperial edict, let them first be scourged, and then beheaded, according to the laws."* This blessed company of faithful witnesses was

* Tillemont's Memoires Ecclesiastiques; Cave's Lives of the Primitive Fathers. These authors have collected with great care the notices of the life of Justin to be found in his works. His literary labours, as enumerated by Eusebius, (lib. iv., cap. 11—18,) are certain treatises against Marcion, Apologies to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, and his successor; two books against the Gentiles; a Discourse on the Monarchy of God; another, On the Soul; and the celebrated Dialogue with Trypho the Jew. Others are alluded to, but not named.

then led off to the place of execution, and received the crown of martyrdom. Some of the brethren privily obtained their bodies, and buried them in a suitable spot.*

Thus Justin obtained that title which has ever since been so honourably affixed to his name. He exchanged the appellation of philosopher, for that of martyr. There can be little doubt but that he greatly contributed to bring the doctrines of Christianity under the notice of persons who had before regarded them with contemptuous indifference. Doubts have been justly entertained, whether he did not allow his habits of philosophising to interfere sometimes with that simplicity of doctrine, which it was of the utmost importance to preserve uninjured. In his style, on the contrary, he was remarkably free from the slightest tendency to affect wisdom of speech; and it has been observed of him, that though he was perfectly skilled in various kinds of knowledge, he took no care to adorn the natural beauty of philosophy with the artificial ornaments of eloquence; and that his discourses, in consequence, though very learned, have little eloquence or grace.†

CHAPTER IV.

Tatian—Suffered for the Sake of Christ — Persecutions multiplied — Quadratus—Dionysius—His "Embassy on behalf of the Christians"—Dr. Burton quoted—Persecutions in Asia Minor—Martyrdom of Papias—His Character—Broached the Notion of the Millennium—Its Fallacy—Polycarp—Place of his Birth—Magnificence and Celebrity of Smyrna—Present State of that City—Stoa—Early Life of Polycarp—Pionius—Bucolus—Education of Polycarp—Church of Smyrna—Her Character—Polycarp constituted Bishop of that Church—Archbishop Ussher, who supposes he was the Angel of the Church mentioned in the Apocalypse—Character of the Bishop—His early Privileges—Story of the Bandit Captain—Polycarp is visited by Ignatius—Polycarp and Ignatius compared—Persecution of Trajan—Polycarp visits Rome—Cause for this Journey—Marcion disputes concerning the Time of the Observance of Easter—Amicable Settlement of the Question—State of the Church in the early Part of the Reign of Aurelius—Marcomanni—Severe Persecution in Asia Minor—Statius Quadratus, Proconsul—Quintus of Phrygia—Circumstances which increased the Severity of the Persecution—Dreadful State of Smyrna—Epistle of the Smyrnæan Church—Martyrdom of Germanicus—Polycarp is called for—Retires from the City—His singular Vision—And Apprehension—Herod and Nicetes—Irenarch—Polycarp appears in the Stadium—Is interrogated by the Proconsul—A mysterious Voice heard—Remarks upon it—Polycarp replies to the Proconsul—Philip the Asiarch—Polycarp is condemned to the Flames—His Prayer—Strange Appearance of the Flames—Fragrant Smell—Remarks on these Traditions—Death of Polycarp—Thraseas is martyred, and others—Apollinarius—His Defence of Christianity—State of the Churches in Asia Minor—The Thundering Legion—Remarks on this Narrative—The Christian Churches at Lyons and Vienne—Their Origin—State of Religion among them—Commencement of the Persecution at Lyons—Epistle of the Lyonese Disciples—Mal-treatment—Vettius Epagathus—His Martyrdom—Many failed in the Hour

* Ruinart, Acta Martyr. Sincera et Selecta. Acta Sancti Justini Philosophi, et Sociorum ejus.

† Stebbing's History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 73. 12mo. London, 1833.

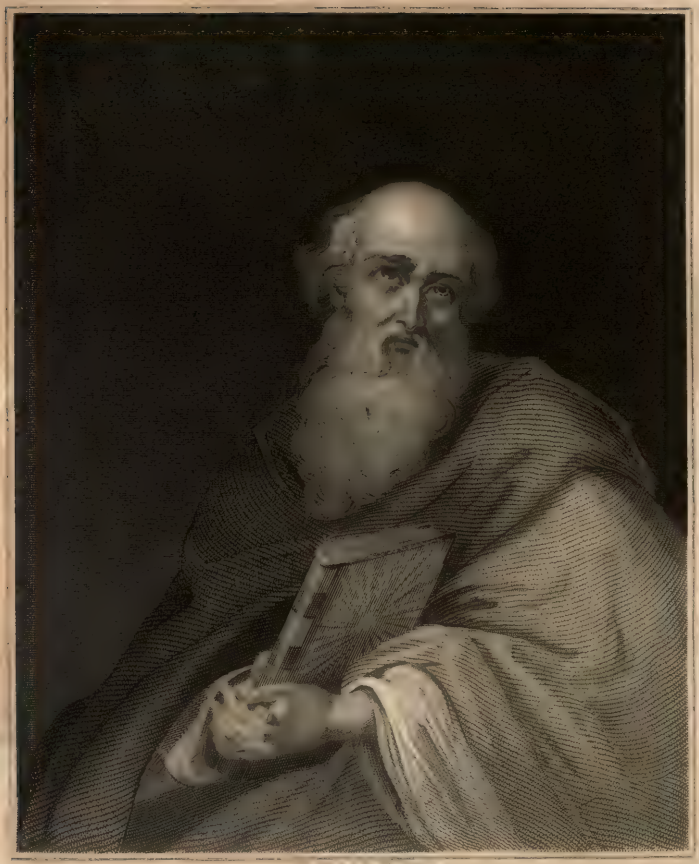
of Trial—Banquets of Thyestes—Rev. Robert Turner—Testimony of Sir David Dalrymple—The Charge of Incest against the Christians examined—Sanctus—Maturus—Attalus—Blandina—Her Fortitude—Severe Tortures inflicted on Sanctus—Case of Biblias—Various Kinds of Punishments—Pothinus—Is martyred—Contrast between the Apostates and the Faithful—Maturus, Sanctus, Blandina, and Attalus, tortured in various ways—Thrown to the Beasts—The iron Chair—Maturus and Sanctus slain—Blandina and Attalus again tortured—Marcus Aurelius appealed to—Who encourages the Persecution—Alexander—Submits to the Torture—Ponticus is martyred—Blandina expires—Remains of the Martyrs insulted—Three Descriptions of Heathens who persecuted the Church—Popish Fable respecting the Relics of these Martyrs—Symphorianus—His Martyrdom—Irenæus—Testimony of Joseph Addison, Esq.—Apollonius the Tutor of Marcus Aurelius—Superstition in the Church—Alcibiades—Character of the Lyonese Epistle—Rev. Joseph Milner—Irenæus—Alexander and Epipodius—Are examined—Their undaunted Bearing—And manly Address—Epipodius is beheaded—Martyrdom of Alexander—Gregory of Tours—Marcellus and Valerian suffer Torture and Death—Their supposed Relics—Other Martyrs—Marcus Aurelius engages in a second Campaign against the Marcomanni—Temple of Bellona in Rome—Superstitious Observances—His Victories—He meditates a third Campaign—Arrested in his Progress by an alarming Illness—Character of his Son and Successor Commodus not favourable—The Emperor's dying Address to his Attendants—His Death—Character of his Reign—Dr. E. Burton—Commodus—His Character—Reason of the Cessation of Persecution—Marcia—Exercises Kindness toward the Christians—Apollonius—Irenæus—John Foxe, the Martyrologist—Julius suffers Martyrdom—The abandoned Conduct and Assassination of Commodus.

SUBSEQUENT to the martyrdom of Justin, we read of Tatian, a native of Assyria, who had travelled in various countries, and at length visited Rome. Here he met with the martyr, and became his disciple. He was converted by reading the books of the Old Testament, and suffered in the persecution which was fatal to his master. He appears to have been a voluminous writer; and in his Oration against the Gentiles, attacks the Heathen so openly and unsparingly, that it is difficult to say how he contrived to preserve his life, when his teacher was put to death. He afterwards fell into fearful heresy. Rome, however, was by no means the only place in which the Christians were treated with cruelty at this time. The middle of the second century appears to have been marked by persecutions in various parts of the world, which probably arose from the increasing progress of the Gospel. The church in Athens received its full share of obloquy and suffering; it was exposed to danger in being placed among men who boasted because of their learning. But the pride of erudition was by no means confined to the Heathen. Quadratus, the Apologist, was the successor of Publius, the Bishop of this see, who suffered martyrdom at a time when the persecution was extremely violent. Dionysius, the Bishop of the neighbouring church of Corinth, was a man of great piety and learning, though none of his writings are extant; he lived in trying times, when the doctrines, as well as the lives, of his fellow-Christians were in danger, both from open and from secret enemies, and contrived, not only to provide for the safety of his own immediate flock, but for the members of other and distant churches. Athenagoras flourished about this period, and presented his work, entitled, "An Embassy in behalf

of the Christians," at a time when the Emperors celebrated their triumph for the victories in Parthia, and before they set out for their war with the Marcomanni. "We are not informed," says Dr. Burton, "whether he succeeded in improving the condition of the Christians. His work acquaints us with the horrid calumnies which were spread against them, and the iniquitous sufferings which they were made to undergo. The Governors of provinces are stated to have been unequal to the number of cases which were brought to their tribunals; and though this may show that the forms of justice were observed, and the more favourable decrees of Hadrian and Antoninus were still in force, there is abundant proof that the enemies of the Christians were able to carry their point; and that on some pretence or other, either by a forced construction of the laws, or by the overpowering clamours of the mob, the believers in Christ were exposed on all sides to sufferings and death."*

In the churches of Asia Minor, there is abundant reason to believe that the persecution against the Christians was prosecuted with great vigour. Those persons who remembered the beloved disciple during his residence in Ephesus, must have been comparatively few. Among these, however, Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, and Papias, the Bishop of Hierapolis, survived, both of whom suffered martyrdom. The death of Polycarp is well authenticated; that of Papias rests upon less certain evidence. The only authority which we have for the martyrdom of the Bishop of Hierapolis, fixes its date to the year 163, and states that he was put to death at Pergamos, and that he was succeeded by Abercius. The character of Papias has been attacked and defended by many writers. Eusebius speaks of him in one place as extremely learned; and in another, as having very little judgment; which expressions may be reconciled, and exhibit his true position. His proximity to the apostolical times, if not his personal acquaintance with some of that sacred community, would put him in possession of facts which it would have been interesting for us to know. Probably Philip passed his later years at Hierapolis; and Papias may have seen persons who remembered his residence in that city. Many have supposed, that Papias was the first to propagate in the church some strange notions respecting a millennium. This was doubtless the case. He believed that, previous to the final judgment, there would be a resurrection of the just, who would have dominion with the Saviour upon earth for a thousand years. "Eusebius," says Dr. Burton, "who acquaints us with this fact, is probably right, when he says that Papias misinterpreted the apostolical declarations, and misunderstood their figurative expressions. But the extensive reading of this simple-minded man may also have contributed to form his belief upon this point. There is evidence that the Gnostics expected a millennium; and Gnosticism, which was compounded of Platonism, the Oriental doctrines, and the Jewish Cabbala, might have found in all those systems some mystical allusions to a future period of terrestrial enjoyment. There is no doubt that Justin Martyr believed that Jerusalem would be rebuilt, and that Christians would rise again to enjoy

* Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xviii.



the society of their Redeemer for *one thousand* years: he, however, does not hesitate to state, that there were many Christians, of sound and religious minds, who did not agree with him in this notion. It was also entertained by Irenæus, at the end of the second century, who refers to Papias, as having preceded him in this belief; and according to Jerom, there had been a personal acquaintance between Papias and Irenæus. Tertullian defended the doctrine in his writings, which he was bound to do after he became a Montanist, as it formed a part of the creed maintained by that party, though wholly unsupported by the Scripture. Papias and Polycarp were friends. The distance between Hierapolis and Smyrna was not great. Their lives were greatly protracted; and Polycarp accompanied his venerable friend to the same termination of his earthly sufferings.*

Polycarp was born toward the close of the reign of Nero, and it is generally supposed in Smyrna, a city of Proconsular Asia, eminent for the wealth of her citizens, the magnificence of her buildings, and the beauty of her situation. She was the first among the seven cities that entered their claim of being the birth-place of Homer, in memory whereof they had a library, and a *portico* called Homerium, with a temple, and the statue of the poet, adjoining; they also circulated a kind of brass coin, which they called after his name. It was a place of considerable honour and renown; it not only had many magnificent titles imposed upon it by contemporary historians, but in several ancient inscriptions, set up by order of the Senate, it is styled, "the chief city of Asia, both for beauty and greatness, the most splendid, the metropolis of Asia, and the ornament of Ionia." Smyrna was a very ancient city; but having been destroyed by the Lydians, it lay waste four hundred years to the time of Alexander the Great. It was rebuilt at the distance of twenty *stadia* from the ancient city; and we soon find it flourishing greatly, in the time of the first Roman Emperors. It was at this time that it became the seat of a Christian church, which is noticed in the Apocalypse, as one of the seven churches of Asia, addressed by the Apostle John, and shares with Philadelphia his unalloyed commendation. It was destroyed by an earthquake A.D. 177; but the Emperor, Marcus Antoninus, caused it to be rebuilt with even more than its former splendour. It afterwards, however, suffered greatly from earthquakes and conflagrations, and must be regarded as having declined much from its ancient importance, although from the convenience of its situation it has still maintained its rank as a great city, and the central emporium of the Levantine trade; and seeing the terrible decay which has fallen upon the numerous great and beautiful cities of Asia Minor, its relative rank among the existing cities of that region is probably greater than that which it anciently bore.† "Few of the Ionian cities have furnished more relics of antiquity, or of greater merit, than Smyrna; but the convenience of transporting them, and the number of investigators, have exhausted the mine: it is, therefore, not at all wonderful, that

* Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xviii.

† Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature, vol. ii., p. 777, *in loco*.

'of the *stoas* * and temples, the very ruins are vanished,' and it is now extremely difficult to determine the sites of any of the ancient buildings, with the exception of the stadium, the theatre, and the temple of Jupiter Acræus, which was within the acropolis."†

The Greeks assert, that Polycarp was educated at the charge of a certain noble matron, whose name, we are informed, was Callisto, a woman of great piety and chastity, who, when she had exhausted all her granaries in relieving the poor, had them replenished in answer to the prayers of Polycarp. The circumstances which attended this singular report, have been recorded by Pionius, to the following effect: —Callisto, being warned by an angel in a dream, sent and redeemed Polycarp, then but a child, of some who had purchased him: she took him to her house, furnished him with the means of education, and finding him a youth of promising talents, made him the steward of her household, whose alms he distributed so freely, that her storehouses were literally emptied: at this his fellow-servants complained; and Callisto, doubting the testimony which he gave of the application of her goods, demanded the keys, and required the resignation of his trust. On entering the stores, as the account states, she found them filled with food, and in as good condition as could be desired.‡

In his younger days, Polycarp is said to have been instructed in the faith by Bucolus, whom John had consecrated Bishop of Smyrna; but for this we have not sufficient authority; authors, however, of more unquestionable credit, and ancient date, tell us, that he was John's disciple, and not his only, but, as Irenæus, who was his scholar, assures us, he was taught by the Apostles, and familiarly conversed with many who had seen our Lord in the flesh.§

The church of Smyrna did not in any degree emulate the city in outward splendour and magnificence, but she excelled in the beauty and brightness of internal holiness. She was poor, as the world understands that expression; but she was rich, in the estimation of

* Στοὰ, "porticus," a walk covered with a roof, which is supported by columns, at least on one side. A porticus was either attached to temples and other public buildings, or it was built independent of any other edifice. Such shaded walks and places of resort are almost indispensable in the southern countries of Europe, where people live much in the open air, as a protection from the heat of the sun and from rain. They were originally intended as places for persons to assemble and converse in, who visited the temple for various purposes. The *Stoic* school of Philosophy derived its name from the circumstance, that the founder of it used to converse with his disciples in a στοα.

† Discoveries in Asia Minor, including a Description of the Ruins of several ancient Cities, and especially of Antioch of Pisidia. By the Rev. F. V. J. Arundell, British Chaplain at Smyrna. 8vo. Vol. ii., p. 407. London, 1834.

‡ Pionius was a Priest of Smyrna, and martyr. He was arrested on the great Sabbath of the Jews, A.D. 250, and in company with Sabina and Asclepiades, was led to Polemon, the protector of the idolatrous temple, where he delivered a discourse on religion to the persons who were gathered together on the occasion. He, with the other two, was then conducted to prison. When the Proconsul arrived at Smyrna, Pionius, after having undergone the torture, was condemned to be burnt, with one Metrodorus. He suffered the cruelty, with wonderful patience and fortitude, on the 12th day of March according to some, on the 22d according to others. (Moreri, Le Grand Dictionnaire.) The account of the miraculous supply of food is not supported by any competent authority. Cave mentions the fact; but Ruinart, (Acta Martyrum,) Eusebius, (Hist. Eccles.,) Tillemont, (Mémoires pour l'Hist. Eccles.,) and Butler, (in his Lives of the Saints,) are all silent on the subject.

§ Iren. adv. Hæres., lib. iii., cap. 3, sect. 4; Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. iv., cap. 14.

the kingdom of heaven. In her infancy she was much harassed, both by the avowed and insidious attacks of the Jews, as appears from the testimony of holy writ: "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty; (but thou art rich;) and I *know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." (Rev. ii. 9.) These adversaries, as will appear in the sequel, were only introductory to the more serious assaults of the Pagan, who openly came against her with the sword, and, what was even more to be dreaded, secretly under the guise of philosophy. We have no direct information of the introduction of the Gospel into Smyrna; but ecclesiastical history attributes, upon the authority of ancient tradition, the formation of the church to the Apostle John. The proximity of the city to Ephesus, and the easy access to it as a maritime place, favour the conclusion that at an early period it was a scene of apostolic labour. The whole eastern coast of the Ægean was navigated by St. Paul: his course from Mitylene to Miletus lay by the entrance of the Smyrnæan gulf; his ministry at Ephesus was doubtless extended to the benighted districts around it; so that it is not improbable, that from the lips of St. Paul himself the Smyrnæans had the first intelligence of the communications of revealed truth.

At the period of John's exile in Patmos, a church, distinguished for its spirituality and zeal, existed in Smyrna; and so had Polycarp recommended himself to that inspired discerner of spirits, that he ordained him with his own hands * as Bishop of that community. Archbishop Ussher argues, also, and there is strong presumptive evidence in favour of his opinion, that Polycarp was the "angel," or Pastor, upon the occasion of the beloved disciple addressing the church. The objections that are urged against this supposition, chiefly rest upon his youth at the time of the Apostle's banishment; but from his own statement of his age, at the period of his martyrdom, A.D. 167, it does not appear that he was too young to have then exercised the important office of the ministry. He had been for "eighty and six years," at his death, a servant of Christ; and supposing him to have been fourteen at his conversion, his birth is brought down to the year 67, which makes him nearly thirty years of age at the era of the Apocalypse. There is strong presumptive evidence in the Epistle itself, that Polycarp was the presiding Minister of the Smyrnæans; for the prophetic intimation of trouble and persecution is in close agreement with his history; and, applying the address to him who was ere long awaiting the horrors of martyrdom, there is something extremely significant in the exhibition of a "crown of life," and in the exhortation to "be faithful unto death." † "Behold, the devil

* Tertullian, with the ancients generally, states this: "Hoc enim modo ecclesiæ apostolicæ census suos deferunt, sicut Smyrnæorum ecclesia Polycarpum ab Johanne conlocatum refert: sicut Romanorum Clementem a Petro ordinatum." (De Præscript. Hæret., cap. xxxii.) In this ordination probably some other Apostle assisted, who had also aided in his education. (See Iren. adv. Hæres., lib. iv., cap. 3, 4, who is also quoted by Euseb., Hist. Eccles., lib. iv., cap. 14.)

† History of the Seven Churches of Asia; their Rise, Progress, and Decline; with Notices of the Churches of Tralles, Magnesia, Colosse, Hierapolis, Lyons, and Vienne. Designed to show the Fulfilment of Scripture Prophecy. By the Rev. Thomas Milner, M.A. 8vo., pp. 202, 203. London, 1832.

shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten * days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. ii. 10.)

Polycarp possessed all the qualifications of a good shepherd: he constantly exhibited before his flock the brilliant example of the Lord's Apostles, and with zeal and fidelity did he discharge his onerous and responsible duties so as to obtain the esteem and affection of that church. His privileges had been confessedly great: that word which we read in inanimate letters, or hear through the voice, he received from the lips of the writer, accompanied with the living language of features and gestures. The application of it which we make to daily life by meditation, he made by the daily, and even hourly, instruction which he was receiving. All that he heard in the way of advice or injunction was a portion of the word. It was around him, like the air in which he lived and breathed; while to us it is like the water which we must purposely apply. He was witness also to a daily practical comment upon it by its inspired deliverer, full both of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost. He looked on no picture of the imagination framed by inadequate study and imperfect practice. Before his eyes was the living body, were the living actions, were the living words, of the Apostle. He could not see the whole breadth and depth of the prospect of the future church, which has become our astounding retrospect. He would have been overpowered with fright at the giddy height on which he stood. The veil of futurity hid it immediately from his eyes. Yet prophecy would tell him enough to warn him of his peculiar responsibility. He knew that himself was appointed to be one of a few main links of Christian testimony, on each of which would depend a multitude of others to the end of time. His conduct in the ministry was in accordance with these reflections, and he was severely tried.†

A circumstance is related of the Apostle John, in which Polycarp of Smyrna was in some degree implicated. The former had occasion to visit a city not far from Ephesus. Here he became acquainted with a youth, whose outward bearing, and seemingly good disposition, greatly interested him. His stay, however, could not be prolonged. Whereupon, at his departure, turning to the individual whom he had appointed Bishop of Smyrna, he solemnly, in the attesting presence of Christ and his church, committed to his charge the young man whom he had deemed so promising a subject. The Bishop accepted the charge; and, after conducting him through the regular course of catechetical instruction, finally, believing him to be sincere and

* "Ten days." The prophecy evidently indicates a time of great and fierce persecution; a definite period is put for an indefinite, and intended to denote frequency and abundance, when Smyrna shall be stained with the blood of martyrs, giving her Bishop to the fires, and having her Christian profession and fidelity tried even unto death. "Thou hast changed my wages ten times;" that is, frequently changed them. (Gen. xxxi. 7, 41.) "Those men have tempted me now these ten times." (Num. xiv. 22.) "These ten times have ye reproached me." (Job xix. 3.) "He found them ten times better than all the magicians." (Dan. i. 20.)

† Biography of the early Church. By the Rev. R. W. Evans, M.A. 12mo., pp. 73—75. London, 1837.

devout, admitted him to the sacrament of baptism. After this, on the ground that the supposed neophyte was sufficiently defended by the baptismal seal of the Lord, the episcopal superintendence was slackened. But the judgment proved erroneous. The youth, left to the devices of his own evil heart, followed the natural, though hitherto unsuspected, bent of his inclination; and thence speedily joined himself to a troop of idle and dissolute and thoroughly profligate individuals, his equals in point of age. For a season they indulged only in expensive and riotous living; but at length they organized themselves into a regular gang of marauding banditti. The charitably-supposed real convert, on which presumption he had been admitted to the holy sacrament of baptism, exceeded them all in violence, bloodshed, and ferocity; whence, by acclamation, he was chosen to be their Captain. Thus, from bad to worse, affairs went on for a season. In the course of time, business brought the Apostle John to the same city; and, on his arrival, one of his first inquiries respected the promising youth, in whom he had felt so deep an interest. "Bishop," said he, "pay me back the loan, which, with the church for our witness, Christ and I intrusted to you." The Bishop, not understanding his cheerful raillery, thought that, through calumny, he was thus called upon to refund a sum of money which he had never borrowed; but the Apostle soon undeceived him. "I re-demand at your hand," said he, "the soul of the youth whom I intrusted to your pastoral care." On this, groaning and weeping, "Alas!" replied the Bishop, "he is dead!" John promptly inquired, how and when and by what death. "To God he is dead," rejoined the Bishop; "for he is fallen away to all evil courses; until at length, becoming a robber, he has, instead of taking Christ's church for his portion, occupied, with his abandoned associates, a mountainous wild, fit for their lawless purposes." Forthwith, at these lamentable tidings, after rebuking the Bishop for his negligence, the holy and aged Apostle rent his garments, and beat his head: then, having demanded and procured a horse and a guide, he took, without hesitation, the direct road to the formidable haunt of the robbers. Reaching their outposts, "Lead me," he cried, "to your Captain; for I am come specially to see him." The Commander of the banditti, little, at first, suspecting the character of his visiter, received him armed as he was; but, as soon as he perceived the well-remembered countenance of the venerable man, he precipitately betook himself to flight. "My son," cried his eager pursuer, regardless of his own age and infirmities, "why fleest thou from thy old and unarmed father? Fear not: there is still, in Christ, a hope of thy salvation." At these oft-repeated exclamations, the robber-chief first stopped, with his eyes fixed to the ground; then, throwing down his arms, he burst into a flood of tears, wherewithal he was baptized as with a second baptism. Upon this, the Apostle led him back to the church; and, offering up abundance of prayers, and wrestling with him in prolonged fastings, and soothing him with words of hope and consolation, he desisted not until he had restored him to the church; thus exhibiting a mighty example of true change

of mind, (μετανοίας,) and a signal indication of regeneration, (παλιγγενεσίας,) even to a trophy of such a resurrection from the spiritually dead, as all men might openly behold.*

In the year 115, Ignatius arrived at Smyrna on his journey to Rome, where he was shortly called by martyrdom to enter the rest that remaineth to the people of God. His heart was overflowing with gratitude and joy at its approach. We must not indulge in conjecture, how seriously and with what cheerfulness they would, during the Bishop of Antioch's temporary residence at Smyrna, converse on the all-engrossing subject. They each regarded themselves as sheep for the slaughter. The different tempers of these men add considerable interest to our conceptions. "Ignatius was full of Peter's fire; but Polycarp had all the dove-like gentleness of John. Ignatius was impatient to obtain the crown: Polycarp was content to wait the time of enjoyment. Both were humble. But Ignatius exults in the prospect of dying the death of a malefactor: Polycarp calmly resigned himself to it. It is this resemblance of character to his master that keeps his privilege of having been his disciple much more continually and distinctly in our minds, than we do that of Ignatius." † Ecclesiastical history has not furnished a more interesting and affecting narrative than that of the journey of Ignatius from Antioch to Rome. In tracing the procession of the martyr to his final triumph, we forget that we are reading of a prisoner who was dragged to his death in chains. He was committed to a guard of ten soldiers, who at first appear to have treated him with severity; and having taken a ship at Seleucia, they landed for a time at Smyrna. Here, it is intimated in one of his letters, that the soldiers who attended him were bribed, and were thus induced to allow the brethren access to him, though with much insolence and rudeness. During the stay of Ignatius at Smyrna a convocation of the Bishops and Deacons of the neighbouring Christian communities was convened, whom he exhorted, with the believers generally, to watchfulness and fidelity, warned them of the heresies that were beginning to spring up, and directed them to hold fast the tradition of the Apostles. When he departed, Polycarp sent one of his Deacons, Burrhus, with him as far as Troas, by whose hands he sent letters in return to the Bishop and his flock, in which he entreated Polycarp to take care of the Church of Antioch; but whether he personally interfered in providing a successor to his martyred friend, we know not.

The persecution which raged during the days of Trajan well-nigh exhausted its virulence in the immediate neighbourhood of the imperial city; in Smyrna it had scarcely been perceived. A long and happy rest visited the church. In the mean while, Polycarp laboured to strengthen her stakes, by administering to her purity and usefulness. It was about this time, A.D. 158, that his presence was required in the capital. The leaders of the Gnostic party had with

* Stories of the Primitive and Early Church. By Sophia Woodrooffe. Edited, with an Introduction to the Subject, by G. S. Faber, B.D. 16mo. pp. 126—129. London, 1845.

† Evans's Biography of the Early Church, p. 76.

considerable success been propagating their opinions in the city of Rome; and, as the scriptural canon could not have obtained among the generality of the people, in order to be read and understood, the pernicious doctrines of that heresy greatly prevailed. The influence of Marcion* was extensive; and as the Clergy were unaccustomed to his subtleties, and knew not how to refute them, the testimony of one so venerable and experienced as the Smyrnæan Bishop was judged expedient. He accordingly, when about his hundredth year, undertook this perilous journey. The joy and satisfaction which his arrival in the metropolis of the Roman empire excited, must have been great, especially as the effect of his presence had by no means been miscalculated. Many were led to renounce their heretical errors, when Polycarp testified the truth which he had received at the lips of the Apostles.† There is some evidence that Marcion was rebuked by Polycarp, either before he visited Rome, or during his temporary residence in that city. An anecdote is preserved which is perhaps more suited to biography than history, but which is valuable as being reported by Irenæus, who had himself conversed with Polycarp. He tells us that the Bishop was on one occasion met by Marcion, who asked him for some sign of recognition; but the only reply which he received was, "I recognise the first-born of Satan." The record shows that these two persons were once in contact; and that a heresy so soul-degrading as that which Marcion propagated, could change the lamb-like spirit of the aged Prelate into the asperity of the lion.

But Polycarp had another object in view in his visit to Rome. The churches of Asia differed from the western churches with regard to the day of termination of the fast which introduced the festival of Easter. The former ended it on the fourteenth day, which was that of the Jewish passover; whereas the latter continued it until the day of the resurrection, which day they always fixed on a Sunday, while the former observed it on whatever day of the week it might fall according to the lunar course.‡ Each claimed apostolical authority for their practice, the former that of St. John, the latter

* Marcion was a follower of Cerdon; and though he is said to have come to Rome about this period, and to have attained the zenith of his fame some years later, when Anicetus was Bishop, there is positive evidence that he was known as a Gnostic teacher at an earlier period. He was a native of Sinope, in Pontus; and Tertullian applies to him a term which might signify that he was a sailor. (De Præscript. 30.) His father was Bishop of Pontus. The sequel of Marcion's history is disgraceful. Having seduced a young woman, he was expelled from the church by his own father, whose principles are represented as particularly strict, having in vain tried to soften him into forgiveness. Being taunted in his own country for the disgrace he had incurred, he thought fit to withdraw, and, according to Epiphanius, he went immediately to Rome. It seems, however, almost certain, that his lapse into heresy took place before his journey to that capital. It is stated that he was known as an heretic in the reign of Hadrian; and one writer says expressly, that he began to propagate his heresies in Asia, and was there reproved by persons who had been disciples of St. John. (Burton's Lectures on Eccles. Hist., vol. ii., pp. 105, 106; Elliott's Delineation of Romanism, London edit., pp. 677, 691.) For a description of the tenets of Marcion, see Mosheim's Institutes of Eccles. Hist. translated by Murdock, edit. Soames, vol. i., pp. 193, 194; Bishop Kaye's Tertullian, pp. 474, 475; Tillemont, Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire Ecclesiastique, tom. ii., pp. 291, *et seq.*

† Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. iv., cap. 14.

‡ Ibid., lib. v., cap. 24.

the usage of their predecessors. Polycarp appeared as the advocate of the Asiatics, and Anicetus took the lead of the opposite side; the peace of the church was threatened, and the union of the members in danger of being destroyed. Warm disputes followed, which were not composed until the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, which ordained that the feast should always be observed on the Sabbath; only, as it was a moveable festival, no small difficulty long continued to be felt as to its adjustment. The interview between the two Prelates was friendly; no bonds of love were broken; the venerable Asiatic obtained the esteem and confidence of the Roman Bishop; they partook together of the body and blood of the Lord: thus testifying, in the most solemn and distinct manner, by deeds, and not merely by words, their essential unity, and unfeigned love.* In this ordinance Anicetus still further evinced his sincere regard for his illustrious and venerable guest, by conceding to him, in his own church, the post of consecrating the elements of the eucharist. Having accomplished the objects of his journey, Polycarp returned to Smyrna.

For a long period after the return of Polycarp to his charge, he continued to watch over the flock, and to promote by his advice and influence the welfare of the neighbouring churches. For upwards of seventy years he had been teaching, admonishing, and confuting; he had fought the good fight, and had finished his course; and the great Head of the church had determined that he should receive his crown in a way which should most edify and encourage the faithful from whom he was taken. Marcus Aurelius Antoninus had not long assumed the purple when the sanguinary persecution, before alluded to, commenced against the Christians. New edicts and decrees which the Emperor had sanctioned, were scattered throughout Asia, by means of which numerous impudent and greedy informers "vexed the church." But the storm increased to a tempest about the seventh year of his reign, A.D. 167, when the Emperor contemplated an expedition against the Marcomanni,† a race of people who had already struck terror into Rome. The heathen Priests were summoned, and religious rites celebrated, while Marcus Antoninus would be given distinctly to understand, that the most efficacious way to

* "When the blessed Polycarp went to Rome, in the time of Anicetus, and they had a little difference among themselves, likewise, respecting other matters, they immediately were reconciled, not disputing much with one another on this head. For neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp not to observe it, because he had always observed it with John the disciple of our Lord, and the rest of the Apostles, with whom he associated; and neither did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe it, who said that he was bound to maintain the practice of the Presbyters before him. Which things being so, they communed with each other; and in the church Anicetus yielded to Polycarp, out of respect, no doubt, the office of consecrating; and they separated from each other in peace, all the church being at peace; both those that observed, and those that did not observe, maintaining peace." (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. v., cap. 24.)

† "The Marcomanni, a colony, who, from the banks of the Rhine, occupied Bohemia and Moravia, and joined a general conspiracy which terrified the Romans under the reign of Marcus Antoninus; it comprehended almost all the nations of Germany, from the mouth of the Rhine, to that of the Danube. This dangerous invasion required all the firmness and vigilance of Marcus. He fixed Generals of ability in the several stations of attack, and assumed in person the conduct of the most important province on the upper Danube. After a long and doubtful conflict, the spirit of the barbarians was subdued." (Gibbon.)

propitiate the gods, and secure success to his arms, was to discountenance and root up the sect which was established to destroy their worship. If new enactments against the Christians did not proceed immediately from himself, he permitted them to emanate from his provincial Governors; and the rein was thrown over the shoulders of shameless sycophants who were thirsting for their blood in order that they might obtain the scanty property which some might possess. Night and day the Christians were the victims of a heartless plunder.

The Proconsul of Asia Minor, Statius Quadratus, does not at this period appear to have been personally hostile to the Christians; but the heathen people, with whom the Jewish rabble joined themselves, were enraged against them, and the Proconsul yielded compliance to the fury of the people and the demands of the law. He endeavoured to move the Christians to recantation by threats, by the sight of the torture, and of wild beasts, to whom they were to be thrown; and if they remained steadfast in their faith, he condemned them to die. In one respect, certainly, he yielded too far to the savage cruelty of the people; and that was in choosing painful and ignominious kinds of death, such as throwing them to wild beasts, or making them perish on the funeral pile; for the law did not require this from him. But, on the other hand, as the law denounced, in general terms, sentence of death against obstinate adherence to Christianity, people chose to suppose that persons who were not Roman citizens must perish ignominiously. Under the severest tortures, even such as raised the pity of the Heathen themselves, the Christians manifested great tranquillity and fortitude. "They showed us all," says the church of Smyrna, "that they were absent from their bodies during these torments; or rather that the Lord stood by them, and conversed with them; and, relying on the grace of Christ, they despised the torments of the world." But the difference was here exhibited between the passing intoxication of enthusiasm, which, though it sought danger with rash self-confidence, turned to cowardice at the presence of death,—and that resolute devotedness to God which waited for his call, and then sought strength from him. One Quintus of Phrygia, a nation peculiarly liable to fantastic and exaggerated feelings, with many others who had been seized with this enthusiastic fire from his persuasion, appeared before the tribunal of the Proconsul of his own accord, and declared himself a believer; a conduct which, although always blamed by the church, gave an opportunity to the Heathen to represent the Christians as a set of restless enthusiasts, who ran into danger and death, in the blindness of a deluded imagination. Now, when the Proconsul pressed this Phrygian hard, and had affrighted him by the sight of the wild beasts, to which he was to be thrown, he gave in, swore by the genius of the Emperor, and offered sacrifices. The church, after the narration of these circumstances, add this remark: "Therefore we do not approve of those who give themselves up; for the Gospel does not instruct us to do this." *

* Neander, "History of the Christian Religion and Church during the first three Centuries," vol. i., pp. 106, 107. 8vo. London, 1831.

There were yet other circumstances which tended to expedite and render more severe the sufferings of the Christians: a dreadful pestilence was ravaging the whole empire, and a dangerous and protracted war with the northern barbarians harassed and grieved the minds of the people; so that, no longer content with depriving their innocent victims of their property, their lives now fell a sacrifice to the popular tumult. This fearful atrocity commenced at Smyrna; and amidst the games of the amphitheatre, where the most brutalizing passions were fostered by cruelty and sensuality, and roused by the detestable and heart-sickening spectacles which were exhibited, one single word uttered against the Christian name reminded every bosom that there existed a body of men whose fondest enjoyments were condemned, and whose claim to the sympathy and regard of humanity was repudiated and spurned. This was now the state of affairs with regard to the Christian church in the far-famed city of Asia. In a crowd pervaded by one common feeling, a single voice touching the chord will raise an unanimous and deafening shout to answer it. The lives of a whole community were often suspended in jeopardy upon the breath of the most worthless poltroon, who, revelling on the miseries of others, obtained a wretched existence amid the purlieus and filth of a half-civilized city. Smyrna now realized the extreme horror of this perilous situation. The people proceeded to the most dreadful excesses. Some were flayed alive with scourges, some were roasted with fire, some given to be devoured by beasts, and others subjected to the most ingenious tortures which human malice and frenzy could suggest. The firmness with which the martyrs who suffered previous to Polycarp endured the torture is recorded in the account circulated by the Smyrnæan church:—"Those standing round were struck with amazement at seeing them lacerated with scourges, to their very blood and arteries; so that now the flesh concealed in the very inmost parts of the body, and the bowels themselves, were exposed to view. Then they were laid upon conch-shells from the sea, and on sharp heads and points of spears on the ground; and, after passing through every kind of punishment and torments, were at last thrown as food to wild beasts." The account records also that Germanicus, a most noble youth, was particularly eminent as a martyr; who, strengthened by divine grace, overcame the natural dread of death implanted in us; although the Proconsul was desirous of persuading him, and urged him from considerations of his youth, and entreated him, that, as he was so very young and blooming, he should take compassion on himself. He, however, hesitated not, but eagerly irritated the wild beast against him, all but forcing and stimulating him, that he might the sooner be freed from this unjust and lawless generation. When, therefore, the patience of the martyrs was crowned by the bold daring of Germanicus, the multitude rent the air with cries of "Away with the atheists!*

* "Away with the atheists!" From the notorious circumstance of the Christians despising the false gods of the Pagans, and denying their existence as deities, they were charged with atheism; a plausible and popular accusation, easily admitted by persons whose insane prejudices allowed them not the common honesty of fair and rational

Let search be made for Polycarp!" and search was forthwith made.*

When Polycarp heard of the clamour of the people, he resolved to stand at his post unmoved; but, being persuaded by the entreaties of his friends, he retired to a farm contiguous to the city, where he remained a day and a night, in constant prayer for the peace of the churches throughout the world. During the night, while engaged in supplication, he had a trance, and beheld his pillow suddenly taking fire,† and thus consumed. On waking, he immediately began to interpret the vision to those who were present, foretelling the event that was about to take place, and that it would be necessary for him to give up his life in flames for Christ's sake. Search for him was now vigorously made; and he was constrained, through the attachment of his brethren, to flee to another part of the country; and here the confession of a slave, who was submitted to the torture, disclosed his hiding-place. Entering the house late on a Friday evening, the police discovered him reclining in an upper chamber, from whence he might have escaped to an adjoining house; but he refused, saying, "The will of the Lord be done." He then calmly gave himself up. He addressed the messengers with a mild and cheerful countenance, who were struck with his placid and venerable

inquiry into facts. Accordingly, Athenagoras mentions that atheism was one of the three stock charges against the primitive believers. (Athen. Legat., sect iv., pp. 15, 16. —G. S. Faber.)

* A relation of the sufferings of Polycarp and his companions was drawn up by their surviving brethren, and sent from Smyrna to the various communities throughout the Christian world. This is one of the most important documents of the early church; it was so valued in ancient times, that Gregory of Tours tells us, that up to his day it was publicly read in the Gallican churches; and Scaliger observes, that he "knew nothing in all ecclesiastical antiquity that was more wont to affect his mind, insomuch that he seemed to be no longer himself when he read it." The substance of the narrative has been preserved by Eusebius in his History; and what he has not given us has been restored by the industry of Archbishop Ussher. (Milner's Seven Churches of Asia, p. 212.) See also the Acta Martyrii of Polycarp, published by Ruinart in his Acta Primorum Martyrum Sincera et Selecta; also in the Patres Apostolici. A translation of "The Circular Epistle of the Church of Smyrna concerning the Martyrdom of S. Polycarp" will be found in Wake's Translation of the Apostolical Epistles, p. 138, *et seq.*, 8vo. edit., 1737. It is abridged in Wesley's Christian Library, 8vo. edit., vol. i., p. 63, *et seq.* The substance of the Epistle may also be seen in the Life and Martyrdom of Polycarp, in Milner's History of the Church, cent. ii., chap. 5, 8vo. edit., London, 1794. Christian Antiquities, by Sir David Dalrymple.

† "His pillow suddenly taking fire." There is no reason to doubt the truth of this account, or to think it impossible that this apostolical Father and martyr should have been forewarned of his sufferings, prepared to expect them, and enabled to give his friends this proof that God was with him and assisted him. He himself interpreted the vision, signifying by what death he should glorify God. Without this intimation, he could not have known that he should be condemned to the flames, because there were many other ways of destroying criminals; and of several martyrs who at that time had been executed, not one had been burnt. When Polycarp was condemned, the populace requested that he might be exposed to the lions; and because it could not be done, they then chose to have him burnt. (Jortin's Remarks on Eccl. Hist.) That the martyr should foretell his death by violence, at a period when persecution was fiercely raging, and his person particularly in danger, was only the result of a common foresight; but that he should distinctly foretell his perishing in the flames, when most of the other martyrs of that time were thrown to the beasts, was evidently miraculous; and the reception of the intimation by a vision was an ordinary mode of divine communication probably not then extinct in the church, and an honour, in such circumstances, not unlikely to be bestowed upon so faithful and aged a servant. (Hist. of the Seven Churches.)

appearance and his composed demeanour, and involuntarily exclaimed, "What advantage is there in apprehending so old a man?" Displaying the fruits of that religion which "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy," Polycarp won the approbation and softened the hearts even of his persecutors. Without hesitation, he directed a table to be prepared for the officers, of which he invited them to partake freely, and begged of them an hour, that he might pray undisturbed. They allowed him two; and, Heathens as they were, they heard him with admiration and awe, deeply regretting that so excellent a man should be put to death. After he had remembered in his intercessions all that had ever been connected with him, small and great, noble and obscure, and the universal church, he was mounted upon an ass, and conducted to the city.

On his way he was met by Herod, the chief officer of police, the Irenarch,* with his father Nicetes, going out of town; who, taking him into his chariot, spoke to him in a kind and friendly manner:—"What harm can it be for you to say, 'Our Lord, the Emperor,'† and to offer sacrifice, and thus to save your life?" Polycarp at first was silent; but when they continued to press him, he calmly said, "I will not do as you advise me." Failing to persuade him, they grew angry, and with bitter and contumelious expressions they threw him out of the carriage, and so violently as to injure one of the bones of his leg. He nevertheless walked on cheerfully, as if nothing had happened, to the Stadium, when the deafening shouts of the spectators met his ear.

As he entered the Stadium, a voice was heard, sufficiently distinct to be recognised by many of the friends of Polycarp, although the speaker was unobserved: "Be strong, and have courage, Polycarp."‡

* "Irenarch." It was the business of the Irenarchæ, in other places called Præpositi Pacis, to search for and apprehend seditious persons, and those who disturbed the public tranquillity. Archbishop Wake has on the margin of his translation of the Smyrnæan Epistle the words, "Justice of the Peace," which does by no means give a proper notion of the office. Archbishop Parker mistakes the nature of the office and the character of Herod the Irenarch; for he says, that "Polycarp was apprehended by a fanatic and hot-headed Justice of the Peace." (See Demonstration of the Divine Authority of the Christian Religion, p. 383.) We have no officer of the law with us whose duty is precisely the same with that of the Irenarch; although we have different officers who may occasionally discharge the same sort of duty. The office is better known on the Continent. (Sir David Dalrymple.)

† "Our Lord, the Emperor." We learn, from the words of Tertullian, what the sentiments of the Christians about such a demand were: "The name Lord is also one of the names of God. I am willing to call the Emperor lord, but in the common acceptation of language; and then I must not be compelled to call him lord in the same sense that I call God by this name. But I am free from him. I have one Lord, the Almighty and Eternal God, who is the Lord also of the Emperor." (Tertull., Apolog. 34.)

‡ Ισχυε και ανδριζου, Πολυκαρπε. Various sentiments have been entertained with regard to this part of the narrative. Some have hinted that the story of the voice is altogether fictitious; some have imagined that one of the Christians, a spectator, uttered the words; and others have believed the voice to have been miraculous. We conceive that the flippant remarks of Dr. Conyers Middleton on this circumstance cannot reasonably be entertained. The brethren heard the voice as Polycarp was entering the Stadium; but the uproar of the enthusiastic and unfeeling multitude arose when Polycarp had entered; consequently, the objection which he takes to the narrative on the ground of a tumult, in which no one could be heard, is without foundation. Le

As he advanced, the Proconsul asked him, "Art thou Polycarp?" which being acknowledged, Quadratus immediately began to persuade him to recant. "Regard," said he, "thy great age; swear by the genius of Cæsar; repent, and say with us, 'Take away the atheists!'" The holy martyr, looking about the Stadium, and with a severe and determined countenance beholding the crowd, beckoned to them with his hand, sighed, looked up to heaven, and said, (though quite in another sense than they intended,) "Take away the atheists!" On the Proconsul still insisting, and saying, "Swear, and I will release you: revile Christ;"—Polycarp answered, "These fourscore and six years serve I him, and he has never wronged me: how, then, can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?" But when the Proconsul persisted in requiring him to swear by the fortune of Cæsar, Polycarp said, "Since thou ostentatiously requirest me to swear by what thou stylest 'the fortune of Cæsar,' as if thou wert ignorant of what I am, hear me boldly speak: I am a Christian; and if thou wouldest learn what is the doctrine of Christianity, appoint a day, and hear."

Up to this stage of the proceedings, the Proconsul showed that he did not act from any obstinate religious bigotry, and would gladly have saved the old man if he could silence the people; but now all his feelings of commiseration fled, and he said to the Bishop, "Persuade the people." He replied, "I hold it fit to answer for myself before thee; for we are taught to render unto magistracy, and unto the powers which are ordained of God, all due reverence, so far as we may without wounding our conscience; but as for that multitude, I hold them unworthy that I should pronounce the apology of my faith unto them." The Proconsul said, "I have wild beasts: to them will I deliver thee, unless thou changest." Polycarp replied, "Call them

Clerc is among many who suppose that some of the bystanders uttered the words; and there is an appearance of truth in this conjecture, as the Stadium at Smyrna was situated on the side of an eminence, and words spoken from thence may have seemed to have issued from above, in the opinion of those who stood at the entrance of the Stadium; especially when we consider the agitated state in which the disciples of Polycarp would be, when they witnessed the entrance of their Bishop. It is a miracle which certainly might be counterfeited. One single Christian might have made the speech from a house-top near the Stadium; and if he kept his counsel, all his brethren might have been deceived by him. The human voice, when strong and clear, may be heard at a great distance. The heralds in Homer had this accomplishment, and were *βοην αγαθοι*· and Darius Hystaspis had an Egyptian in the army who was as good as a speaking-trumpet, (Herod., iv., 141,) and who saved Darius and his army, when they were in great danger, by the force of his lungs. For ourselves, we discover nothing frivolous in this interposition, inasmuch as it was intended to encourage the sufferer; although we are inclined to imagine, that if the voice had really been supernatural, the more consistent phraseology of the Gospel, like that employed by St. Paul, would, we may fairly presume, have been used: *Στηκε εν τη πιστει, Πολυκαρπε, ανδριζου και κραταιου.* (1 Cor. xvi. 13.) It is difficult, or rather impossible, to determine the precise time when miracles ceased. The probability is, that, after the last Apostle was removed, they gradually became more rare, until at length they ceased altogether. We may be morally sure, that a violation of the laws of nature would not be continued beyond the time when, as a tangible attestation to the truth of Christianity under the aspect of a really divine revelation, it was absolutely necessary. Miracles, when once the Gospel has been sufficiently ratified by them, are not granted, either to convince the unreasonable sceptic, or to set idle people wondering and talking. (See Jortin's Remarks on Eccles. Hist.; Faber's Notes appended to Stories of the Primitive and Early Church; and my Sermon on "The Signs of an Apostle, and the Evidence for the Cessation of Miraculous Powers in the Church, considered," Oxford, 1832.)

forth; for that I should change from the better to what is worse, is impossible; but to change from evil to good, *that* is excellent." Then said the Proconsul, "Since thou despisest the wild beasts, I will cause thee to be subdued by fire, unless thou change." Polycarp answered, "Thou threatenest me with a fire which burneth for a season, and will be speedily extinguished; but thou art ignorant of that fire of a future judgment and everlasting pains, reserved for the wicked. But why lingerest thou? Bring forth whatever to thee seemeth good." Making these and many similar declarations, he was filled with confidence and joy, and grace seemed to overspread his countenance; so that he shrank not, neither was he dismayed, at the things that were uttered against him. Finding his firmness invincible, the Proconsul commanded the crier to proclaim, "Polycarp has confessed himself to be a Christian."

On this, the populace, composed of Heathens and Jews, furiously cried out, "This is the teacher of impiety, the father of the Christians; the man who is for putting down our gods, and who teacheth the people to abstain from sacrificing, and from religious worship." The Asiarch * Philip was urged by them to set a lion on Polycarp, which he refused, alleging that he had finished the games, so far as exposing to beasts was concerned; and that, therefore, it was not in his power. Then they all with one voice cried out, "Let Polycarp be burnt alive." As soon as the Proconsul had complied with the demand of the populace, that Polycarp should perish on the funeral pile, Jew and Gentile hastened with the utmost eagerness to collect wood, fagots, and straw from the market-places, workshops, and baths. Polycarp then laid aside his garments; and having unloosed his girdle, he sought to untie his sandals. This he had not usually done aforetime; for all the believers were wont to strive who should be the first to do these offices for him,—so much was he honoured by reason of his virtuous demeanour, even before he had attained to old age. The instruments belonging to the execution were soon placed around him; but when they prepared to fasten him with nails, he said, "Suffer me to remain as I am; for He who enableth me to endure the fire, will also strengthen me to abide unmoved,

* "Asiarch." Ασιαρχαι were, in the Roman provinces of Western Asia, the chief presidents of the religious rites, whose office it was to exhibit games and theatrical amusements every year, in honour of the gods and Roman Emperors, at their own expense, like the Roman Ædiles. As the exhibition of these games was attended with great cost, wealthy persons were always chosen to fill this office; for which reason Strabo says, that some of the inhabitants of Tralles, which was one of the most wealthy cities in Asia Minor, were always chosen Asiarchs. They were ten in number, selected by the different towns of Asia Minor, and approved of by the Roman Proconsul: of these, one was the chief Asiarch, and frequently, but not always, resided at Ephesus. Their office only lasted for a year; but they appear to have enjoyed the title, as a mark of courtesy, for the rest of their lives. (Strabo, xiv., p. 649; Acts xix. 31; with the Notes of Kuinoel and Barnes.) This title also occurs in a Greek inscription at Assar, in Mysia, copied by Mr. Fellows. (Excursion in Asia Minor, p. 49.) In the letter written by the church of Smyrna respecting the martyrdom of Polycarp, (c. 12,) we read that Philip the Asiarch was requested by the infuriated people to let loose a lion against Polycarp, which he said it was not lawful for him to do, as the exhibition of wild beasts (κυνηγεσια) had been finished. In another part of this Epistle, (c. 21,) Philip is called High-Priest, (Αρχιερευς,) which appears to show that he must have been chief Asiarch of the province.

although you do not fix me with spikes." They therefore did not nail him; they only bound him. Before the fire was lighted, he offered the following prayer:—

"O Lord God Almighty, Father of thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom we receive the knowledge which telleth of thee, O God of angels and of powers, and of all the creation, and of all the family of the just who live in thy presence,—I bless thee that thou hast thought me worthy of this day and hour, so that I should be a partaker in the number of thy witnesses, in the cup of thy Christ, unto the resurrection of everlasting life, both of soul and body, in the incorruption of the Holy Spirit. Amongst whom may I be accepted before thee this day, through a fat and acceptable sacrifice, according as thou hast beforehand prepared, and manifested, and hast fulfilled, even thou, the unfailing and true God. On this account, and for all things also, I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, together with thy everlasting and heavenly Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son; to whom, with thee and the Holy Spirit, be glory now and for ever. Amen!"

The fire was then lighted around him; and when it had ascended in one vast flame, it presented the appearance of an oven, as when the sail of a vessel is filled with the wind, and encircled the martyr as it were in a chamber of fire, where his body remained unconsumed, like gold in the furnace.* At the same time an exquisite fragrance was emitted,† as of frankincense and other spices, to the great com-

* "The sail of a vessel filled with the wind." This account must be received with caution; for how useless was it to suspend the action of the fire, and then permit the sword of the executioner to perform its office! If Polycarp had predicted that his enemies could not, and should not, burn him, the circumstance would have appeared remarkable; but here is a martyr who could not be burned, but who was perforated with a dagger without difficulty! besides the seeming disagreement of the prediction and the event; so that we naturally ask for the use of the miracle. We regret the record of such a story, being convinced that in its tendency it would rather turn to the discredit than to the advantage of the hallowed cause. The Pagans had many examples, in their fabulous and poetic history, of men who had been unhurt in the flames,—of Priests and Priestesses who walked barefoot over the fire without harm: by many this was considered the result of magical incantations; and probably, by the vulgar Pagan and the malignant Jew, Polycarp was viewed as an old magician, who had recourse, though in vain, to enchantments; and that although his demon had for a time secured him from the flames, he could not protect from the sword. It is not improbable that the Jews and Pagans, in their zeal and fury, had collected wood sufficient to consume ten persons, which they placed around the martyr, and ignited in several places, which blazed up as at the pile of Crœsus, περι εσχατα, at the extremities on all sides, and arched over Polycarp. Something like this was seen at the martyrdom of Porphyrius. (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. viii., cap. 11; see Jortin's Remarks on Eccles. Hist., vol. i., p. 212, edit. 1846.)

† "An exquisite fragrance was emitted." This is confessedly a very suspicious miracle. The fact, in all probability, was true: scented wood is common in Eastern countries, and the odour might proceed from the fuel; for the people ran about to the baths and other places to obtain wood, some of which might probably be of that description; or, which perhaps is less likely, the Christians, to honour the martyrdom of their Bishop, might adopt a pagan practice, and cast aromatics and spices over the funeral pyre; it being an ancient custom, in various places, when burning dead persons of rank and quality, to cast into the flames an abundance of fragrant drugs and perfumes in honour of the deceased. The Christians, however frugal in other respects, in these expenses were profuse at the interment of their brethren. Hence the language of Tertullian: "Thura planè non emimus. Si Arabiæ queruntur, sciant Sabæi pluris et carioris suas merces Christianis sepeliendis profligari, quam diis fumigandis." (Tertul., Apol., cap. xliv.) "We buy, certainly, no frankincense. If the Arabians complain

fort and delight of the flock. At length, witnessing the resistance which his body offered to the flames, the impatient and exasperated multitude commanded an attendant, one of those who were wont to despatch wild beasts when they became outrageous, to draw near and plunge his sword into him; which he had no sooner done, than the quantity of blood issuing from the wound was so great as to quench the fire.* Thus the body was preserved; but the faithful were not allowed the satisfaction of paying to it the last honours. The malignant Jews prompted Nicetes to persuade the Proconsul not to give the body to the Christians, lest, leaving their crucified Master, they should henceforth worship Polycarp. The Centurion therefore placed his remains in the midst of the fire, where they were speedily consumed. The pitiful slander which the enemies of the church cast upon the believers, was indignantly refuted in the Epistle of the Smyrnæans: "Little do they consider how impossible it is that either we should forsake Christ, who died for the salvation of the whole world, or that we should worship any other. Him we adore as the Son of God; but martyrs, as the disciples and followers of our

of this, let the Sabæans know that more and more costly merchandise of theirs is lavished in the burials of Christians, than in burning incense to the gods." The Papists have ever been fond of this wonder, probably on account of the ease with which it may be performed. But the relics of the canonized have smelt (so we have been told) of the odoriferous perfume ages after the carcass of the saint has rotted. And the Mussulman, little behind the Romanist in credulity, piously believes the body of his Prophet to send forth a divine fragrance. Tillemont is excessively elated with this prodigy, and never fails to record it with great seriousness; and, indeed, there is no reason to question the fact; for of all miracles it is the easiest to be performed, and therefore the least satisfactory.

* In the Epistle which was circulated by the church of Smyrna, it is stated, that when the weapon was plunged into the body of the martyr, εξηλθε περιστερα, "egressa est columba," a dove went forth. This statement is not given by Eusebius, nor Rufinus, nor Nicephorus, nor in two MSS. of the Latin translation of the Epistle. It was certainly in the MS. which Archbishop Ussher employed; but is not supposed to have been in the original Epistle of the church; and Dr. Brooke asserts, that "there is not a syllable of the dove to be found in the Greek Menæology." Le Clerc, in his Ecclesiastical History, passes the dove over sub silentio, as not worthy to be mentioned; (p. 729;) and in his Bibl. Chois. (xxvi., p. 218) he absolutely rejects it as an interpolation: "Il n'y a rien de cette colombe dans un MS. que le P. Ruinart cite, non plus que dans Eusèbe, etc., ce qui fait croire que c'est une addition de quelqu'un, qui vouloit rendre, par une fraude pieuse, le martyre de S. Polycarpe plus merveilleux." Neither Archbishop Wake nor Sir David Dalrymple alludes to it. That it should find a place in the history of martyrdom during the period when spurious miracles were rife, we are not surprised. When the virgin Eulalia was put to death, we are told by Prudentius, a dove, spotless and white as snow, flew out of her mouth. This has made many suspect that the story of Polycarp's dove might be somewhat more ancient than the time of Prudentius, and give occasion to the fiction about Eulalia's dove. In the third century, when the Roman Christians were assembled to choose a Bishop, a dove came and sat upon Fabian's head, to point him out for that office. This rumour Eusebius asserts in his History, lib. vi., cap. xxix. In the fourth century, Ephraim Syrus went to Cæsarea, to visit Basil, and to hear him preach; and saw a dove, white as snow, and bright as the sun, sitting upon Basil's shoulder, and whispering to him what he should say. (Tillemont, Hist. Eccles., tom. ix., p. 209, ed. Paris, 1703.) The probability is that the writer of the celebrated Epistle makes no mention whatever of the dove. A blundering transcriber wrote, Εξηλθε περιστερα και πληθος αἱματος, "A dove came out, and abundance of blood;" instead of, Εξηλθε επ' αριστερα πληθος αἱματος, "A great quantity issued out on, or to, the left side," &c. (Jortin's Remarks on Eccles. Hist.) The Rev. William Trollope, the Editor of the new Edition of Jortin's Remarks, suggests the true emendation to be περι στερνα, which is effected by the insertion of a single letter.

Lord, we deservedly love for their eminent kindness towards their own Prince and Master, whose companions and fellow-disciples we also by all means desire to be." So far were those primitive and better ages from that undue and superstitious veneration of the relics of martyrs and departed saints, which after-ages introduced into the church.*

When the great leader of the Christians was no more, and the exhibition of games ceased, the rage of the multitude was appeased, and they did not call for any more victims: but the thirst for Christian blood was not allayed in other cities of Asia; and there is reason to think, that it shortly after revived in Smyrna itself, though the earthquake, which nearly destroyed the city, (a dreadful retributive providence,) may have checked for a while the rage of persecution. Thraseas,† Bishop of Eumenia, suffered martyrdom there in this or the following reign; and if we may believe a later writer, that Papirius succeeded Polycarp in the bishopric, we may, perhaps, add, on contemporary authority, that he died by martyrdom. A similar fate befell Sagaris of Laodicea, of which place he was Bishop, while Sarvilius Paulus was Proconsul of Asia. Apollinarius,‡ Bishop of Hierapolis, presented a defence of Christianity to Marcus Aurelius about this period, which seems to indicate that his church was suffering persecution.§ But if any evidence was wanting of the sufferings which the Christians underwent in Asia Minor during this reign, we may refer to another Apology presented to the same Emperor by Melito, Bishop of Sardis. Eusebius gives the title of many works which he composed, and he seems to have left a considerable name as a man of learning; but we have to regret that his "Defence of Christianity" has shared the fate of all his other compositions. We learn from a small fragment of it, that the work of persecution was then at its height, and that the Magistrates were acting under the authority of some new decree which the Emperor had been persuaded to enact, and the execution of which he left to the provincial Magistrates.

In the year 169, the two Emperors left Rome to make war against the Marcomanni, and several German tribes, which were becoming formidable by their inroads upon the Roman provinces. Julius Capitolinus represents the alarm which these barbarians excited as extremely great; and that the religious as well as military preparations were pursued with very great activity. Unusual measures were taken to secure the smile of heaven; and since the Priests were specially consulted, and the city of Rome was purified by every means which religion presented, there is reason to fear that the season was one of severe trial to the Christians. It is impossible for us to determine whether this hasty confederation was formed by necessity,

* Lives of the most eminent Fathers of the Church, that flourished in the first four Centuries; with an historical Account of the State of Paganism under the first Christian Emperors. By William Cave, D.D. Vol. i., p. 192, *et seq.* 8vo. Oxford, 1840.

† Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. v., cap. 18.

‡ Ibid., lib. iv., cap. 27.

§ Ibid., lib. iv., cap. 26.

by reason, or by passion; but we may rest assured, that the barbarians were neither allured by the indolence, nor provoked by the ambition, of the Roman Monarchs. This dangerous invasion required all the firmness and vigilance of Marcus Aurelius. The Quadi and the Marcomanni, who had taken the lead in the war, were the most severely punished in its catastrophe. They were commanded to retire five miles from their own banks of the Danube, and to deliver up the flower of their youth, who were immediately sent into Britain, a remote island, where they might be secure as hostages, and useful as soldiers.*

A report has been current among Christians since the commencement of the third century, that the Emperor was disposed to deal more favourably towards them, on account of a circumstance which transpired, of a somewhat miraculous character. During the war against the Marcomanni and the Quadi, the army of Marcus was reduced to great distress,—a burning sun lay upon it in front, and it was then suffering the extremities of thirst from a drought, and expecting every instant an attack of the enemy; but upon the soldiers of the Miletenian or twelfth Legion, which consisted chiefly, if not entirely, of Christians, falling down upon their knees, and praying to God, a thunder-storm followed, the lightnings of which dispersed the Germans, while a copious shower refreshed the soldiers of the Emperor. The Roman army consequently gained the victory; and in commemoration of this event, Marcus gave the legion the name of "Legio Fulminea." It is also stated, that the Emperor ceased to persecute the Christians; and although he did not go so far as to receive their religion into the class of "religiones licitæ," he published an edict, inflicting heavy penalties on those who accused the Christians merely on the score of their religion.† That, during the German war, the Roman army suffered severely from the want of water, and was relieved from a situation of great peril by a seasonable shower of rain, is a fact which does not rest on the single authority of Tertullian. It is recorded by several profane writers, and confirmed by the indisputable testimony of the Antonine column. Nor was Tertullian singular in regarding the event as preternatural; the heathen historians did the same. But while Tertullian ascribes the deliverance of the Emperor to the prayers of his Christian soldiers, Dion Cassius gives the credit of it to certain magical rites performed by an Egyptian, named Arnuphis; and on the Antonine column it is attributed to the immediate interposition of Jupiter Pluvius.‡ This

* Gibbon's Decline and Fall, vol. i., p. 400. 8vo. Milman's Edit.

† At nos e contrario edimus protectorem, si literæ M. Aurelii gravissimi Imperatoris requirantur, quibus illam Germanicam sitim Christianorum forte militum precationibus impetrato imbri discussam contestatur. (Tertul., Apologet., cap. 5.) Marcus quoque Aurelius in Germanicâ expeditione Christianorum militum orationibus ad Deum factis imbris in siti illa impetravit. (Tertul. ad Scapulam, cap. 4.)

‡ It is said that the Prince prayed to Jupiter, stretching out his hands towards heaven; and saying, "This hand, which never shed human blood, (for I reckon not the blood of the enemies of the gods,) I stretch forth to thee!" There were pictures where he was represented praying, and the soldiers catching the rain in their helmets. The Emperor himself expresses his notions on this matter on a coin, where Jupiter is represented as hurling down his lightning on the barbarians stretched upon the ground; and

latter circumstance completely disproves the statement of this writer, respecting the existence of a letter, in which the Emperor ascribed his deliverance to the prayers of his Christian soldiers; a statement, indeed, neither reconcileable with his general character, nor with the harsh treatment experienced by the Christians during his reign.* Much truth and falsehood are, therefore, blended together in this narration. There might have been many Christians in the army of Marcus Aurelius; but that they formed a whole separate legion, is manifestly the fiction of a later age. The thing is, however, very easily explained. The Christian soldiers, under the pressure of this distress, took refuge, as they were accustomed to do, in prayer; they looked upon their deliverance as the answering of their prayers; and, on their return home, told their story to their fellow-believers, who would not fail to remind the Heathen of what they owed to the Christians whom they so persecuted. It has also been shown, that one of the Roman legions was called the "Thundering legion," long before the time of the present Emperor, ever since the days of Augustus Cæsar;† and that Marcus Aurelius could not have been induced to suspend his persecution of the Christians by any event of this date, for the persecution at Lyons took place only three years later. The letter, which is said to have been written by the Emperor in favour of the Christians, is now acknowledged on all hands to have been a forgery. Historians generally admit the fact to be indisputable; but the greater part of them deny that any miraculous interposition is due to the prayers of the faithful. Why, however, the account of the Christians is not at least as credible as that of the Heathen, who attribute a miracle to Jupiter, Mr. Gibbon gives us leave to conjecture.

The close of the reign of Marcus Aurelius was signalized by another scene of martyrdom, distant from that where persecution had before raged with the greatest violence, though not altogether disconnected from it, by the original descent of the sufferers. The Christians of Lyons and Vienne appear to have been a religious colony from Asia Minor, or Phrygia, and to have maintained a close correspondence with those distant communities. To this district the two Herods, Archelaus and Antipas, were successively banished; and it is singular enough, that Pontius Pilate, after his recall from Syria, was exiled to the same neighbourhood. Here, however, was a

perhaps, also, in his Meditations, at the end of the first book, where, among the things for which he has to thank, not himself, but the gods, he names, in the last place, the occurrences among the Quadi. It is also quite certain, that this remarkable event can have had no influence on the Emperor's sentiments towards the Christians. (Neander's History of the Christian Religion and Church, vol. i., p. 116.)

* The Ecclesiastical History of the Second and Third Centuries, illustrated from the Writings of Tertullian. By John Kaye, D.D., Bishop of Lincoln. 8vo., p. 107. Second Edition. Cambridge, 1826.

† See Witsius, De Legione Fulminatrice, annexed to his Ægyptiaca; Laroque, De Legione Fulminatrice, subjoined to the Adversaria Sacra of M. Laroque. Those who are desirous of further information on the subject of the Legio Fulminea, will do well to consult the remarks made on the early miracles by Bishop Blomfield, in the notes to the volume of Sermons preached at St. Botolph. (See also Mosheim, Cent. ii., Part I., sect. 10.) Jortin is flippant; and Gibbon sneers at the Christians as usual. (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. v., cap. 5; Lardner's Works, vol. vii., p. 177, *et seq.*)

Christian community, corresponding in Greek with the mother church. It is by no means improbable that a kind of Jewish settlement of the attendants on the banished Sovereigns of Judea might have been formed in the neighbourhood of Vienna and Lyons, and maintained a friendly, no doubt a mercantile, connexion with their opulent brethren of Asia Minor, perhaps through the port of Marseilles.* Though Christianity does not appear to have penetrated into Gaul till rather a late period, it may have travelled by the same course, and have been propagated in the Jewish settlement by converts from Phrygia or Asia Minor. Its Jewish origin is, perhaps, confirmed by its adherence to the Judæo-Christian tenet of abstinence from blood.

The origin of the intercourse between the churches of Vienne and Lyons with the Christians in Asia Minor, is not satisfactorily stated. The names of some persons have been preserved, who are said to have been sent into Gaul by Polycarp, and to have suffered martyrdom there. Irenæus was also commissioned thither by the same individual; and we know, says Dr. Burton, from his own words, that in his younger days he had seen that venerable and apostolical Bishop in Asia. It is not improbable, that,† when Polycarp came to Rome, about the year 158, some of his companions may have continued their journey westward, and visited Gaul; or, if we were seeking a reason for Christians leaving their homes in Asia Minor, and settling in such a distant country, we might find it in the continued persecutions, which, perhaps, drove many persons to seek an asylum in safer quarters. We have positive evidence that some of the most distinguished Christians in Vienna and Lyons were Asiatic Greeks: Pothinus, the Bishop of Lyons at the time of this persecution, was undoubtedly a Greek; and some traditions have represented him as sent into Gaul by Polycarp, or even by the Apostle John. His successor Irenæus wrote his works in the Greek language; and he speaks of not understanding the Celtic, which was still spoken by some persons in his diocess. The names of several of the martyrs are Greek: Attalus of Pergamos is expressly mentioned; and Alexander, a Phrygian, is not only said to have been many years in Gaul, but the remarkable circumstance is added, that he possessed a portion of the apostolical spiritual gifts. This would, perhaps, confirm the notion of his having seen Polycarp, or some such person, who had conversed with the Apostles. The Liturgies which were used by the Gallic churches before the time of Charlemagne, did not resemble the Roman Liturgy, but were much more like to that which was used in the churches of Asia Minor, which is another proof of religious intercourse having taken place between the two countries.‡

In the cities of Lyons and Vienne, there appears to have been a church; and we may infer, from the rage and violence of the persecutors, that the persons interested in the preservation of Heathenism,

* Milman's History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 193.

† Burton's Lectures on Eccles. Hist., lect. xx., p. 172.

‡ Palmer, Origines Liturgicæ; Dissertation on Primitive Liturgies, sect. ix.; Liturgy of Gaul, vol. i., p. 143 *et seq.*, 8vo., third Edit., Oxford, 1839.

were aware of the steady, but certain, progress which Christianity was making. The storm appears to have been gathering for some time. The feelings of the people rose to a state of ungovernable ferocity, and exceeded, if possible, the fury of the inhabitants of Smyrna. The commencement of this dreadful, though local, persecution, was an ebullition of popular fury. It was about the period when the German war, which had slumbered during some years of precarious peace, again threatened to disturb the repose of the empire. Southern Gaul, though secure beyond the Rhine, was yet at no great distance from the incursions of the German tribes; and it is possible, that personal apprehensions might mingle with the general fanatic terror, which exasperated the Heathens against their Christian fellow-citizens. The Christian community were on a sudden exposed to a general attack of the populace. The churches in Lyons and Vienne transmitted in writing to the Christian communities in Asia and Phrygia an account of their martyrs; from this document, we give the following:—

"The servants of Christ inhabiting Vienne and Lyons of Gaul, to the brethren throughout Asia and Phrygia, of one common faith and hope of redemption with ourselves, peace, grace, and glory from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ our Lord.—The greatness of the tribulation in these parts, the exceeding rage of the Heathen against the saints, and the sufferings of the blessed martyrs, are what we are not able fully to relate unto you, neither indeed can they be contained in writing; for the enemy at the very first invaded us with the greatest violence, showing from the beginning what sore evils we were to expect. He went about everywhere, exercising his servants to skirmish before the combat with the servants of the Lord, insomuch that we were not only excluded from houses,* public baths, markets, and courts of justice, but we were even prohibited from appearing in any place; nevertheless, the grace of God was unto us as a commander against the adversary; it rescued those who were weak, and it ordained chosen persons, as firm pillars, able, through patience, to support the whole force of the assaults of the wicked one. Engaging with him in close combat, they endured reproach, and evil treatment of every kind; and making small account of what others held to be grievous, they hastened unto Christ; and thus they manifested, that of a truth the 'sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.'

"First of all, they courageously endured whatever contumelies the multitude heaped on them; for they were insulted, beaten, and dragged about, spoiled, stoned, and held in durance,† and they suffered

* "From houses." The sense of the passage is, that the Christians were prevented from having any intercourse with their neighbours; not that they were not permitted to remain in their own habitations. "Markets and courts of justice." The word in the original is *αγορα*, which may comprehend both markets and courts of justice. The meaning is, places of public and necessary resort.

† "Held in durance." Valesius remarks, that hitherto the epistle only speaks of the contumelies of the multitude; and, therefore, that this does not mean, that the Christians were imprisoned, but that, having met with insults when they appeared in public, they confined themselves at home. Nevertheless, *συγκλεισεις* is a strong word to be used, were nothing more understood than what Valesius supposes. The enthusiastic

whatever else the brutal multitude delights to inflict on enemies in a state of warfare. Having been brought before the Tribune of the soldiers, and the Magistrates of the city, they were examined in presence of the whole people; and having given their testimony to the faith, they were shut up in prison until the arrival of the Governor.* When they were brought before him, his demeanour to our people was exceedingly savage. Then did Vettius Epagathus,† one of the brethren, fulfil the measure of love towards God, and towards his neighbour. The manners of this person were so strict, that, young as he was, men held him to be altogether a partaker in the testimony given to the ancient Zacharias; for 'he had walked in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.' Moreover, he was nothing slothful in ministering unto his neighbour, very zealous for the Lord, and fervent in spirit. This excellent person could not brook the injustice done unto us; and being moved with indignation, he requested permission to plead the cause of the Christians; for that among us there was nothing ungodly or impious. But those who stood around the judgment-seat exclaimed against him; for he was noted among them all. The Governor, instead of granting his just request, demanded of him, 'Whether he also was a Christian?' Epagathus, with an audible voice, declared, that he was a Christian; and was forthwith numbered among the martyrs, and obtained the appellation of the Advocate of the Christians.‡ But he had an

fury of the Heathen might, possibly, have incited them to imprison the Christians, without any interposition of civil authority. "Magistrates of the city," or the decemvirs; *ἐξουσιαι* properly means the superior Judges, who had the *jus gladii*, or the power of inflicting capital punishments; but it is also used, in a less accurate sense, for inferior Magistrates. (Vide Epistolam Eccles. Viennen. et Lugdun. de Martyr. S. Pothini Episcopi et aliorum plurimorum; Ruinart, Acta Martyr. sincera.)

* Governor, *ἡγεμων*, or "præses." Valesius understands this person to have been the "Legatus Cæsaris;" and he quotes an inscription in Gruter, where mention is made of "Legatus Imp. Nervæ Trajani Cæsaris Aug. Provinciæ Lugdunensis." He adds a remarkable passage from Spartian in Severo, "Deinde Lugdunensem provinciam legatus accepit." And he conjectures, that as Severus, afterwards Emperor, was Legatus Provinciæ Lugdunensis in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, he was the Governor of whom the epistle speaks. The conjecture is ingenious, and the behaviour of this Governor accords well with the harsh and unfeeling temper of Severus; concerning whom it was vulgarly said, "Verè Severus, verè Pertinax." But there is too much reason to believe, that the same character would have been equally applicable to many Governors of provinces of that age. Dion Cassius mentions his government at Lyons; Fr. Balduinus was of the same opinion: "Interea, dum hæc Romæ exercerentur, Lugdunensem provinciam legatus regebat Septimius Severus. Non dubium est, quæ tunc illic de Christianis sumpta supplicia esse dicuntur, hujus Severi imperio irrogata fuisse." (Edict. Princ. Rom. de Christianis, p. 97.)

† All that we know with certainty of this good man is from the Epistle of the Christians of Gaul. Gregory of Tours (Hist., lib. i., cap. 29) mentions a "Leucadius, primus Galliarum Senator, qui de stirpe Vettii Epagathi fuit," in the reign of the Emperor Decius. This passage in Gregory of Tours, says Valesius, plainly indicates, that Vettius Epagathus was a person of the first nobility in Lyons; and, indeed, adds he, the same thing is evident from the epistle itself, where it is said, *και γαρ ην επισημος*. But *επισημος* may imply, "distinguished for his virtues and usefulness," as well as "celebrated on account of his noble birth."

‡ "Obtained the appellation of the Advocate of the Christians." In the original it is *παρακλητος Χριστιανων χρηματισας*. There are various opinions as to the interpretation of this passage. Rufinus understands it to signify, that the Governor gave that title to Vettius Epagathus; (Advocatus quidem Christianorum, Judicis elogio, appellatus;) and Valesius is of the same opinion. Others understand it to imply, that this title was generally bestowed on him by the Christians. It is not improbable, that the Governor, in a taunt-

Advocate within, even the Holy Spirit, in more ample measure than Zacharias, which he manifested in the abundance of his brotherly kindness, choosing to lay down his life for the vindication of the brethren; he was a true disciple of Christ, 'following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.'

"Others, very soon, began to be separately questioned. The foremost martyrs were bright and ready prepared,* and with all alacrity they filled up the just measure of their confession. Now, also, there appeared those who were unprepared and unexercised, feeble as yet, and incapable of supporting the great contest; and of such there fell off to the number of about ten; and these wrought much vexation of spirit unto us, and sorrow not to be measured; and they lessened the courage of the rest, who, not having yet been apprehended, though suffering much, had continued to be present with the martyrs, and had never forsaken them. Indeed, we were all greatly dismayed, by reason of the uncertainty of the event in the day of trial: we did not fear the tortures inflicted; but looking forward unto the end, we dreaded lest any one should fall. And there were apprehended, from day to day, such as were worthy to supply the place of those who had fallen off; so that at length the most excellent persons of both churches,† and they by whose means especially our affairs in these parts had been established, were detained in custody together. Certain Heathens, also, slaves of our people, were apprehended; for the Governor had published a general order, that we should all be sought after; and these slaves, through the instigation of Satan, and dreading what they saw the saints endure, gave testimony against us, as guilty of the murder of young children,‡ and of incest, and

ing style, might have called him the Advocate of the Christians, and that the Christians themselves might have perpetuated the appellation, with the view of doing honour to the brave zeal of Vettius Epagathus. There is reason to believe, that the very name of Christian was at first imposed, and not assumed. (See Acts xi. 26.) The name occurs but once in the writings of the Apostles; (1 Peter iv. 16;) and even there it may be justly understood of a name which the followers of Jesus received from the Heathens, or the Jews, and not of a name which they arrogated to themselves.

* "Ready prepared," διεκρινοντο. They who entered the lists at the Gymnastic shows of the ancients were examined before they obtained permission to contend. Inquiry in a special manner was made, whether they were free born, and whether they were of the age required in combatants. The persons admitted were said, εισκρινεσθαι; and the persons rejected, εκκρινεσθαι. In this epistle there are many allusions to the Gymnastic exercises; but it is difficult to render them into English with precision and dignity; for the words "racers, boxers, and prize-fighters," convey to a modern ear the notion of something mean and venal.

† From the whole strain of this epistle, it is evident, that the Christians in Lyons and Vienne were indiscriminately persecuted; and that no distinction was made by their enemies between bond or free, Ecclesiastics or laymen. Eusebius says, (Eccles. Hist., lib. vi., cap. 28,) that Maximin the Thracian "ordained, that only the Presidents of the churches should be put to death." It is remarkable that Sulpitius Severus does not take this persecution of the Clergy into his account of the general persecutions.

‡ In the original, "banquets of Thyestes," alluding to a well-known incident in the ancient history of Greece. That the primitive Christians were charged as guilty of the murder of young children in their religious rites, is certain; but it is difficult to discover the origin of that charge. There was published in London, in 1727, a treatise, entitled, "The Calumnies upon the Primitive Christians, accounted for. By Robert Turner, M.A., Vicar of St. Peter's in Colchester." The industrious author observes, that the primitive Christians were popularly accused of atheism, of eating young children, and of incest. These, says Mr. Turner, are "the three original calumnies," almost coeval with Christianity itself. With regard to the second accusation, of eating young chil-

of other crimes, which it is not lawful for us to think of, much less to perpetrate, and which, indeed, we cannot suppose to have been ever perpetrated by man. But when the rumour of these things was spread abroad, all men became as wild beasts towards us, insomuch that some who hitherto had shown themselves moderate, either from relation or from neighbourhood, now became exasperated against us. Then was fulfilled that which our Lord spake, 'The time cometh, when whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.' (John xvi. 2.)

"The holy martyrs endured torments which are beyond all description; Satan, meanwhile, eagerly striving, that by them also something flagitious might be acknowledged: but, above all, the whole fury of the multitude, of the Governor, and of the soldiers, was aimed at Sanctus,* a Deacon of the church at Vienne; Maturus, one newly enlightened, yet a steady combatant; and Attalus, a native of Pergamus, who had ever been as a foundation-stone, and as a pillar unto the church in these parts; also against Blandina, in whom Christ showed, that the things which appear unto men base, and without comeliness, and altogether contemptible, are highly honoured in the sight of the Lord, whenever there is in them that love which displays itself, not in osten-

dren, the particulars of it are to be found in Minucius Felix: "Concerning the initiation of novices, an abominable fable is universally reported. An infant covered over with paste is served up to the novice, who, ignorant of the disguise, and suspecting nothing, is excited to prick holes in the paste; and thus, by imperceptible wounds, is the infant slain. Then the persons present eagerly lap his blood, and tear his limbs to pieces. By this sacrifice they are covenanted together, and by such conscious wickedness do they pledge themselves to mutual secrecy. These holy rites are more flagitious than aught that bears the appellation of sacrilege." "I will not stay to prove," says Sir David Dalrymple, "that such abominable rites could never have been celebrated by the true disciples of Jesus. The report of their having been performed, is supposed to have arisen from one or other of the following causes:—(1.) The general enmity of the Heathens against the professors of Christianity; (2.) The flagitious practices of which certain fanatics, in the early times of the Christian church, are said to have been guilty; and, (3.) A mistaken apprehension of some tenets and practices peculiar to the religion of Christ." In respect of the charge of incest, Mr. Turner supposes, that it was owing to the name of sisters, which the primitive Christians gave to young women, and of mothers, which they gave to women advanced in years. But this is hardly satisfactory. Had the Christians been accused of incest in general, the accusation might have been supposed to have arisen from the name of sister, which was given to a believing wife. (1 Cor. ix. 5.) But it was a peculiar sort of incest, the unlawful union of parents and children, of which the primitive Christians were accused. Dr. Whitby imagines, that the calumny may have been derived from a passage in St. Paul. (1 Cor. v. 1.) Some of the Heathen might have met with this passage; and as they were exceedingly inaccurate in their inquiries concerning the Christian system, they might, perhaps, have inferred from it, that such incest was generally practised among the Christians, notwithstanding the admonitions of their teachers. (See An Account of the Martyrs at Smyrna and Lyons in the Second Century, with explanatory Notes. By Sir David Dalrymple. 12mo. Edinburgh, 1776.)

* "Sanctus, a Deacon of the church at Vienne." Valesius understands the words to imply, "Sanctus of Vienne, a Deacon." And he seems to wonder, that they should have been understood in any other sense. And yet, if Sanctus were not a Deacon of the church of Vienne, it would appear that the Clergy of the church escaped the fury of the persecution altogether. This is improbable, especially as a late writer, of eminent reputation, has observed, that the religious resentment of the Heathens was chiefly directed against Christian slaves and Ecclesiastics. The office of Sanctus was a circumstance of more moment, and more connected with the rest of the narrative, than the place of his birth; and as the words are ambiguous, it would appear, for the reasons here given, that "Sanctus, a Deacon of the church of Vienne," is the preferable interpretation. (Sir D. Dalrymple.)

tatious profession, but in power and in deed. Now all of us feared, that when Blandina was brought unto the combat, she would have been unable, through infirmity of body, to make a resolute confession of the faith; the like fear had her mistress according to the flesh, herself a combatant, together with the martyrs. Blandina, nevertheless, was filled with such mighty power, that the tormentors, who, from the dawn of day until evening, alternately relieving one another, had employed every manner of torture against her, now became exhausted and feeble, through much toil; and they themselves confessed, that *she* had overcome; for, that there remained no further tortures which they could apply; and they were astonished, that her breath continued in her, after her body had been so torn and laid open; and declared also, that any one of the various kinds of torture employed against her, was sufficient to have bereaved her of life. This blessed woman, as a hardy combatant, seemed to have her youth and vigour renewed, while she bare testimony to the faith; and she was restored to ease, and became insensible of her sufferings, when she pronounced these words: 'I am a Christian, and there is no evil done among us.'

"Sanctus also courageously endured the most excessive tortures that could be devised by man. The unrighteous hoped, through the continuance and magnitude of the tortures, to hear from him some confession of things unseemly;* but he resisted them with so great constancy, that he would not so much as disclose unto them either his name or his nation; nor would he say of what city he was, nor whether he was a freeman, or a slave; but to every question that was asked of him, he made answer, in the Roman language, 'I am a Christian.' That he repeatedly avowed to be to him instead of name, and city, and family, and all things. Other language than this the Heathens heard not from him. Wherefore, in torturing him, a mighty emulation arose between the Governors and the tormentors, insomuch that when they had nothing more which they could do against him, they at length fixed heated plates of brass to the most sensible parts of his body, and these indeed were burnt; but he himself inflexibly persevered, firm in his confession, being bedewed and comforted by that heavenly fountain of the water of life which floweth from Christ. His body gave testimony of what had befallen; for it was wholly wounds and weals, distorted, and having put off the appearance of human shape. Christ, also, suffering in him, wrought great marvels, destroyed the adversary, and manifested, for an example to others, that nothing can be formidable where the love of the Father is, and nothing painful where the glory of Christ is concerned. The ungodly, after certain days had passed, again began to torment

* "Confession of things unseemly;" that is, a confession, that things indecent and flagitious were practised among Christians. A learned friend, says Sir David Dalrymple, understands the expression thus: "To hear something improper fall from him, such as blasphemy against Christ." But the interpretation which is given in the text, appears to be justified by a fragment of Irenæus, where the author, after having mentioned that the slaves accused their Christian masters of drinking human blood, adds, that the Heathen strove, "by tortures, to compel Sanctus and Blandina to make confession, or acknowledge the charge."

the martyr; they imagined, that, while his wounds were swollen and inflamed, and incapable of enduring the slightest touch, he would either be overcome through the repetition of tortures, or, expiring amidst them, would cause fear to fall on the rest of the brethren. Nevertheless, nothing of this kind ensued; but, on the contrary, beyond all expectation and belief of man, his body unbent itself * while the tortures were repeated, and it became erect, and resumed its form, and the exercise of its members; so that, through the grace of Christ, this last torture, instead of afflicting, healed.

"There was a certain woman named Biblias, of the number of those who had denied Christ. Satan, confident that she was already devoured of him, sought to increase her condemnation by causing her to blaspheme; † and he brought her forth to punishment, and hoped to constrain her, already feeble and dispirited, to make report that things ungodly were perpetrated among us. But she, in the midst of torments, awaking as out of a profound sleep, recalled to her remembrance the everlasting punishments in hell, gainsayed the blasphemers, and thus spake: 'How can *they* devour children, to whom it is not lawful even to taste the blood of brute animals?' She thenceforward professed that she was a Christian, and had her portion among the martyrs. When Christ, through the patience of the blessed martyrs, had made those tyrannical chastisements to wax feeble, Satan bethought of other devices; confinement in darkness, and a most noisome prison; the grievous straining of their legs in the stocks; ‡ and whatever else the tormentors, when wroth, and filled with the evil spirit, are wont to inflict on their prisoners. Many were hereby suffocated in prison, whom the Lord, to be glorified in all things, willed to depart in that sort; while others, although they had tasted the bitterness of torment, and were past human cure, remained alive, destitute of assistance from man, but comforted by the Lord, —they were strengthened in body and in spirit, and administered encouragement and consolation to their brethren. Others, again,

* "Unbent itself." "The writers of this epistle consider the circumstance here mentioned as something extraordinary; and I admit," says Sir David Dalrymple, "that it was; nevertheless, since it is not said that any of the bones of Sanctus were broken, or that his limbs were disjointed, we ought not to be rash in pronouncing the appearance miraculous. The narrative of this epistle is sober and accurate, and little exposed to the cavils of infidelity. We ought not, without necessity, to adopt an interpretation of the passage concerning Sanctus which might be attended with difficulties."

† Biblias was one of the slaves who, through the force of torture, had borne witness against the Christians, and had accused them of flagitious practices. She was now brought forth that she might in public renew her testimony, or that she might be made to blaspheme. This appears to be the sense of the expression; and accordingly it is observed that Biblias, instead of persevering in her charge against the Christians, completely exonerated them.

‡ "The grievous straining of their legs in the stocks;" the original adds, "of their feet, stretched out unto the fifth hole." This is omitted in the translation, because it is unintelligible without a commentary, and consequently would have led to embarrassment. It appears that there were five holes for each foot in those stocks. When the feet were placed in the fifth hole on each side, they were extended to the greatest possible distance from each other. This Sir David Dalrymple renders by "grievous straining." It is well expressed by Prudentius:—

"Lignoque plantas inserit,
Divaricatis cruribus."

who were newly confined, not being inured to sufferings, and unable to support the load, expired in prison.

"Pothinus, to whom the charge of the bishopric of Lyons had been committed, was more than ninety years old, exceedingly infirm, and, by reason of bodily weakness, could hardly be said to breathe. Nevertheless he became animated and strengthened in spirit, through his earnest desire of that martyrdom which now approached; he also was dragged into judgment, having his body dissolved, as it were, through age and maladies; yet still retaining life for the exaltation and triumph of Christ. He was carried before the judgment-seat by the soldiers, the Magistrates of the city following him, and the whole multitude of the people making all manner of exclamations against him, as if he had been Christ himself; and there did he utter a good confession: for when the Governor demanded of him, who was the God of the Christians; he answered, 'If thou art worthy, thou shalt know.' After this he was unmercifully dragged about, and he endured many blows; for they who were near did evil entreat him with their hands and their feet, not reverencing his grey hairs, while they who were at a distance threw at him whatever they could first lay hold of; imagining, all of them, that had they omitted aught of their contumelious usage, they would have incurred the guilt of impiety; and thus they esteemed themselves to be the avengers of their gods. Pothinus, almost expiring, was again thrown into prison, and after two days he gave up the ghost. And now there ensued a mighty dispensation of God, and an example of the boundless mercy of Christ was exhibited, not such as had often occurred to the brethren,* yet one that was not unsuitable to the method and art, as it were, of his government. When the brethren were first apprehended, they who had become apostates endured imprisonment with the rest, and partook of their sufferings; neither, in that season, did their denial of Christ avail them aught. They who confessed themselves Christians were shut up for that cause alone, and no other charge was brought against them; but the others were held in durance as murderers and defiled,† and received twofold chastisement. The confessors had their sorrows lightened through the consolation of martyrdom, and the hope of the promises, and the love of Christ, and the influence of the Spirit of the Father; but the apostates were grievously tormented by the sentence of their own consciences, insomuch that when they were all brought to judgment, the difference was to be discerned

* Sir David Dalrymple says, "It would seem that Valesius has altogether misunderstood the sense of the passage. He says, 'Notandum est quod aiunt Lugdunenses, rarum adhuc in ecclesia ejusmodi indulgentiæ usum fuisse erga lapsos, nempe, quia ad hoc usque tempus pauci admodum lapsi fuerant: itaque, cessante morbo, nihil opus erat hujusmodi medicina. Subsecutis autem persecutionibus hoc remedium crebrius usitatum est.' The Christians of Gaul speak not of receiving again into the church those who had fallen away. They mean, that on this occasion there was an example of apostates again acknowledging that faith which they had abjured; of this, they say, there were few examples, and they mention it as a peculiar mercy vouchsafed by Christ."

† Of such offences they had confessed the Christians in general to be guilty; and, consequently, they acknowledged themselves to be implicated in them.

in their countenances; for the Christians went on rejoicing, with looks intermingled of glory and abundant grace, and their bonds seemed to be as costly ornaments bestowed on them, as 'on a bride adorned with tresses of gold, wrought with divers colours;' and they had the sweet perfume which is of Christ, insomuch that some imagined them to have been indeed anointed with ointment. But the apostates were dispirited and abject, woful in their appearance, and altogether uncomely; they were reviled as base and unmanly by the Gentiles themselves; and they bare the accusation of murderers, having lost *that name* which is glorious and of great price, and which maketh alive.

"The modes of their departure through martyrdom were various. Having plaited one garland of every sort of flowers, and of different colours, they brought it before the Father; and now it was fitting that those resolute combatants, who had endured the contest in every form, and had mightily overcome, should receive the great and incorruptible crown. Maturus, therefore, and Sanctus, and Blandina, and Attalus, were publicly exposed to wild beasts, that common spectacle of Gentile inhumanity; and, to that end, a day for exhibiting the combats with wild beasts was especially appointed. In the amphitheatre, Maturus and Sanctus again underwent every manner of torture, as if hitherto they had not suffered aught; or, rather, having repeatedly overthrown their antagonist, and being now to contend among themselves for the crown, they again passed through their wonted course of tribulation; they were exposed to be torn of wild beasts, and to undergo whatever else the frantic multitude, clamorously, and after divers manners, ordained; and these things having been finished, they were placed in the iron chair, and their bodies were so scorched, that the noisome smell of the burning spread itself around. Neither even here did the multitude cease; but, waxing more and more outrageous, they strove to overcome the perseverance of the martyrs. Nevertheless, from Sanctus they heard nothing beside that confession, which aforetime he had been wont to utter; namely, that he was a Christian. These two men, Maturus and Sanctus, having continued alive throughout this long and mighty contest, were in the end slain with the sword. Instead of the variety exhibited in the combats of gladiators, they themselves, during the course of that day, were made a spectacle unto the world.

"Blandina was fastened to a stake,* and hung from it, exposed as a prey to the wild beasts let loose against her; and when she appeared in the fashion of one upon a cross, earnestly praying unto God, she greatly encouraged the other combatants; for, in their sister, thus combating before their eyes, they beheld Him who was crucified for their sake, that he might assure all believers in him, that whosoever suffereth for the glory of Christ hath perpetual communion with the living God. And none of the wild beasts having

* Blandina was a slave, and was on that account subjected to this mode of punishment. There may be seen in Lipsius (De Cruce, lib. iii., cap. 11) a delineation of this method of exposing the sufferer to be torn in pieces by wild beasts.

offended her,* she was taken down from the stake, and again imprisoned, and reserved for another combat, that she might increase the condemnation of the crooked serpent,† and by her example animate the brethren. This person, in herself mean and infirm, and wholly despised, was clothed with the strength of Christ, the mighty and unconquerable champion; and she at different times overcame the adversary, and was crowned with an incorruptible garland. Attalus, also, was eagerly sought for by the multitude: he was an eminent person, and entered the lists as a combatant well prepared, through the testimony of a good conscience; for he had been completely exercised in the Christian discipline, and had ever borne witness to the truth among us. He was led round the amphitheatre with a tablet carried before him, on which was written, in the Roman language, 'This is Attalus the Christian.' The multitude swelled with indignation against him. The Governor, when he learnt that he was a Roman, commanded him, together with the others, to be re-conducted to prison. He inquired of the Emperor what should be done unto them, and awaited his determination. This interval was neither unprofitable nor useless to the Christians; but, through the patience of those who had endured, the immeasurable compassion of Christ became manifest; for, by the living were the dead raised to life, and the martyrs obtained favour for those who were not martyrs. By their means many of the apostates returned to the church, and were taught to confess the truth in Christ; and being restored to life, and their spirits *braced*, they repaired to the judgment-seat to be once more questioned by the Governor. That God, who willeth not the death of a sinner, and who is merciful in calling men to repentance, took away the root of bitterness which was in them.

"A command came from the Emperor to the effect, 'That they who confessed Christ should be put to death;‡ but that they who denied him should be set at liberty.' It was now the season of the general convention§ at Lyons, whither men of different nations are

* They had probably been already satiated; or, perhaps, they were disturbed by the shouts and uproar of the multitude. There is no necessity for supposing that anything preternatural happened on this occasion. (Sir David Dalrymple.)

† This expression, in the account of the Christians at Lyons, evidently alludes to Isai. xxvii. 1, "The Lord shall punish the serpent, that crooked serpent."

‡ In the original it is, *αποτυμπανισθηναι*. This word occurs, Heb. xi. 35, *Αλλοι δε ετυμπανισθησαν*. Our translators render it, "tormented," which shows that they were not certain of its meaning; and, indeed, the opinions of the learned are divided concerning it. "Distended like the skin of a drum," "racked on a cross," "beaten to death with cudgels," and "beheaded," are some of the meanings ascribed to it.

§ This was an occasion of great solemnity, when the sixty nations of Gaul met at the altar sacred to Rome and Augustus, on the Kalends, or first day, of August. The figure of this celebrated altar may be seen on medals; and it is particularly delineated in Menestrier, Histoire de la Ville de Lyons, p. 68. The sixty nations of Gaul erected an altar to Rome and Augustus. We need not inquire why divine honours were bestowed on the living Augustus: a court-poet says, with more truth than probably he intended,—

"*Præsenti tibi* maturos largimur honores,
Jurandasque tuum per nomen ponimus aras."

wont, from all quarters, to repair. On that occasion the Governor directed the blessed martyrs to be brought before the judgment-seat, where they were exhibited as a theatrical show to the assembled multitudes. He questioned them anew, and caused all those to be beheaded who were found to have the right of Roman citizens; but with regard to the rest, he exposed them to wild beasts; when Christ was mightily glorified in those who had formerly denied, but now, contrary to the expectation of the Gentiles, acknowledged, HIM; for when these men, about to be dismissed, had the question separately put to them, some confessed their faith in Christ, and were numbered with the martyrs. But they who had no traces of the Christian faith in them, nor knowledge of the wedding-garment, nor understanding of the fear of the Lord, remained without. These were sons of perdition, who, by their conversation, brought an evil report of our way. But the rest were added unto the church. There was a certain man, named Alexander, a native of Phrygia, and by profession a Physician, who had sojourned in Gaul for many years: he was universally known for his love towards God, and his boldness in proclaiming the word; and he was not without a portion of apostolical grace. When they who had formerly apostatized were interrogated by the Governor, Alexander stood near the judgment-seat, and, by signs, encouraged them to make confession of the faith, appearing unto the bystanders like one in travail. But the multitude, grievously offended that they who had formerly denied should now confess the truth, exclaimed against Alexander as the author of this change. The Governor forthwith ordered him into judgment, and demanded who he was. When he said, 'A Christian,' he was wroth, and decreed him to be exposed to the wild beasts. On the day following, Alexander entered the amphitheatre, together with Attalus; for the Governor, willing to give pleasure to the people, had again condemned the latter to be exposed.* In this place of public amusement both underwent whatever torture could be devised; and, having endured this exceeding contest, both were slain with the sword. Alexander all the while uttered not a groan, neither spake he aught; but in his heart he held converse with God. But Attalus, when he was placed in the iron chair, and the smell of his scorched body was spread around, spake to the multitude in the Roman language: 'This which you do is indeed to devour men; but, as for us, we devour not men; neither commit we any other manner of wickedness.' And having been asked, what was the name of (his) God; he made answer, 'God hath not a name, as men have.'

"After all these, on the last day of the public shows, Blandina was again brought in, together with Ponticus, a youth about fifteen years old. Day after day they had been conducted into the amphi-

* This was doubtless done to gratify the spectators, who esteemed the devouring of men by wild beasts to be a far more noble show than simple beheading. The Governor, nevertheless, acted in manifest contempt of the laws. It is strange that Attalus, who was neither a slave nor a Bishop, should have been exposed to such tortures under the mild and envied administration of the Antonines!

theatre, that they might be spectators of the tortures inflicted on the brethren; and now they were peremptorily required to swear by the Gentile idols; and because they steadfastly persevered, and set the idols at nought, the multitude became as wild beasts towards them, so as neither to pity the tender years of Ponticus, nor to reverence the sex of Blandina; they exposed them to whatever was horrible in punishment, and led them round the whole circle of tortures, striving from time to time to make them swear. Nevertheless they strove in vain; for Ponticus, as the Heathens themselves saw, was animated by the exhortation of his sister, and, having courageously endured every torture, gave up the ghost. The blessed Blandina, the last of the whole, was a noble-spirited matron,* who had encouraged her children to the combat, and had sent them before her victorious unto the throne of the King. Having again measured that course which her children had trod, and having combated as they had combated, she hastened unto them with joy and exultation in her departure, as if she had been bidden to a marriage banquet, and not exposed a prey to wild beasts. After she had endured scourging, and had been exposed to wild beasts, and scorched in the iron chair, she was at length enclosed in a net, thrown before a bull; the furious animal oft-times tossed her aloft; but she felt none of these things, for she was full of hope, and by faith laid hold on the promises, and held converse with Christ. In the end she was slaughtered as a victim, and expired. The Heathens themselves acknowledged, that never did woman among them endure so much as Blandina: yet still their madness and cruelty towards the saints were not satiated; for a savage and brutalized people, once excited by the devouring beast, can hardly be appeased. They accordingly sought a new occasion of insulting the bodies of the martyrs; for they felt no shame in being overcome by them, inasmuch as they were devoid of human sense. On the contrary, this inflamed their rage, as if it had been that of a wild beast, both Governor and people equally manifesting their unjust enmity against us, that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still.' They threw to the dogs the bodies of those whom they suffocated in prison; and they kept diligent watch, day and night, lest any of us should bestow sepulture on them. They then laid out the mangled and burnt remains of the martyrs, and whatever the wild beasts had not devoured, or the fire had not consumed, together with the heads of those who had been beheaded,† and the trunks

* There appears to be an allusion in this passage to the story of the Jewish mother and her seven sons, who suffered a cruel martyrdom in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes. (See *supra*, p. 99, *et seq.*)

† This relates to such of the martyrs as were Roman citizens, and in consequence of that quality had been beheaded. In the extract of this epistle which Eusebius has given, he does not specify the number of the martyrs. He himself says, (lib. v., cap. 4,) that it is unnecessary to transcribe the catalogue of them, as contained in the epistle from the Christians of Gaul, because he had inserted the epistle at full length in another work, called, "The Collection of Martyrs;" but, unhappily, that work is lost. Gregory of Tours (Hist. Francor., lib. i., cap. 27) seems to say, that the martyrs of Lyons were *forty-eight* in number. In lib. i., cap. 49, De Gloria Martyrum, he mentions the

of their bodies; and they kept them unburied for sundry days, under the charge of a military guard. Some were filled with indignation,* and gnashed their teeth against the remains of the martyrs, as if they had still sought for more abundant revenge. Others derided and insulted them, magnifying their idols, and ascribing the punishment inflicted on the Christians to their power. There were persons of a milder disposition, who seemed in some sort to sympathize with us; yet they also grievously upbraided us, saying, 'Where now is their God? and what hath that religion profited them which they preferred above life itself?' Such was the diversity of the behaviour of the Gentiles towards us. But we were mightily grieved that we could not bury the remains; for neither did the darkness of night afford any aid unto us, nor could money or entreaty persuade. The Gentiles watched the bodies with all diligence, as if to deprive them of sepulture had been a matter of great gain. After the bodies of the martyrs had been exposed during six days, the ungodly burnt them, and scattered the ashes in the river Rhone,† which floweth by the city,

same number of *forty-eight;* but in recounting their names he only specifies *forty-five*. Out of this list, Attalus, one of the most eminent sufferers, is omitted altogether. This must be imputed to the carelessness of transcribers.

* "In this memorable passage," says Sir David Dalrymple, "the behaviour of three different sorts of Heathens is described; and it may be matter of curious, and not unuseful, inquiry, to trace the principles of each sort. They who were filled with indignation, &c., were probably the Heathens who discovered that the Christian system was incompatible with the Pagan. We know that a rabble of Egyptian, Syrian, Etruscan, and Grecian deities, obtained the privileges of citizenship at Rome, and that the sixty nations of Gaul concurred in erecting an altar to a city and a living man. The politicians who devised, or who established, so strange a community of gods, would not have excluded Christ from their pantheon; but it is probable that they soon discerned the unsociable nature of the Christian religion; because a religion founded on the unity of the Supreme Being is necessarily unsociable, and can never be incorporated with any species of polytheism. They who understand the genius of Christianity, will not suppose *unsociable* and *intolerant* to be synonymous. The next class of Heathens mentioned in the epistle, appears to have been composed of superstitious idolaters, intoxicated with the dregs of Paganism. As their own religion consisted altogether of pageants and ceremonies, the difference between it and the Christian religion must have been discernible even to their rude understandings. By men of such dispositions, ignorant and filled with prejudices, the punishment of the Christians would be considered as the triumph of polytheism. The men of the third sort were those who neither believed in polytheism, nor were active in inculcating the belief of it; but who, having no relish for dangerous inquiries, adored the gods of the state, and sincerely pitied the Christians, who, by avowing unlawful opinions, exposed themselves to capital punishment."

† If in any case the spirit of discovering the relics of holy men could have been restrained, it was in this, where the church itself, without ambiguity of expression, declared, that the bodies and bones of the martyrs, having been collected, were consumed to ashes, and scattered in a wide and rapid river. Nevertheless, towards the end of the sixth century, Gregory of Tours says, (De Gloria Martyrum, lib. i., cap. 49,) "Quorum sancta corpora judex iniquus igni tradi precepit, exustisque in Rhodanum pulveres jussit spargi. Sed postquam hæc gesta sunt, cum Christiani mærorem maximum haberent, quasi deperissent beatæ reliquiæ, nocte apparuerunt viris fidelibus in eo loco quo igni traditi sunt stantes integri et illæsi, et, conversi ad viros, dixerunt eis, *Reliquiæ nostræ ab hoc colligantur loco, quia nullus periit a nobis; ex hoc enim translati sumus ad requiem, quam nobis promisit Rex cælorum Christus, pro cujus nomine passi sumus.* Hæc renunciantes viri illi religiosi Christianis, gratias egerunt Deo, et confortati sunt in fide; colligentesque sacros cineres, ædificaverunt basilicam miræ magnitudinis in eorum honorem, et sepelierunt beata pignora sub sancto altari, ubi se semper virtutibus manifestis cum Deo habitare declaraverunt." It would appear that to the brethren, of whom Gregory speaks, intelligence was miraculously communicated, that the ashes of the martyrs, instead of being thrown into the river, had remained on the spot

that no remains of them might be visible upon earth. These things they did as if they had been able to vanquish God, and prevent the martyrs from rising again: 'That,' as certain among the Gentiles spake, 'they might be deprived of the hope of that resurrection, in confidence of which they have introduced among us a foreign and a new religion, have contemned whatever is terrible in torture, and with readiness and joy have encountered death. Now let us see whether they will rise again, and whether their God is able to help them, and to rescue them out of our hands.'"

In those places where only a few Christians resided, their existence was more easily concealed, and the jealousy of the people was not so easily excited. The Governors did not think it necessary to establish a search for them, except where individuals, from peculiar circumstances, made themselves notorious as enemies of the state religion, which happened about this time in a town not very far from Lyons, called Autun. There was no intention of persecuting the Christians there, as they were in small numbers, and but little known, when a Christian first attracted public notice to himself. The noisy multitude, with great solemnities, were celebrating a festival in honour of Cybele, whose worship appears to have come hither from Asia Minor, by the same route which Christianity afterwards followed, and she appears also to have been held in great respect at that time. An image of Cybele was carried round in one of her usual cars, and accompanied by a great multitude of people. All fell on their knees; but Symphorianus, a young man of high family, conceived that his conscience would not allow him to participate in this rite, and most probably, on being taken to task for it, took occasion to speak of the vanity of idolatry. He was instantly seized, and conducted before the Governor Heraclius, a man of consular dignity, as a disturber of the public worship, and a seditious citizen. The Governor said to him, "You are a Christian, I suppose. As far as I can judge, you must have escaped our notice; for there are but a few followers of this sect here." He answered, "I am a Christian: I pray to the true God who rules in heaven, but I cannot pray to idols; nay, if I were permitted, I would dash them to atoms on my own responsibility." The Governor, on this avowal, declared him guilty of a double crime, —one crime against the religion, and another against the laws, of the state; and, as neither threats nor promises could induce Symphorianus to abjure his faith, he was sentenced to be beheaded. As they led him to execution, his mother cried out to him, "My son, my son, keep the living God in thy heart: we cannot fear death, which leads so certainly to life. Up, my son! let thy heart be up, and look

where the bodies were burnt. The expression, "Postquam hæc gesta sunt," might be understood to imply something which happened immediately after the death of the martyrs. The mention, however, of a "church of wonderful magnitude," and of the depositing the ashes at "the great altar," authorize us to place the era of this tale at the distance of two hundred years from the persecution in Gaul. And, indeed, while the memory of the circumstances of the persecution was recent, this fictitious revelation, contradicting the evidence of the senses of all the surviving Christians at Lyons, could not have obtained credit. (Sir David Dalrymple.)

to Him that rules on high! Thy life is not taken from thee to-day, but thou art conducted to a better. By a blessed exchange, my son, thou wilt pass this day to a life of heaven." *

The testimony of the above-named martyrs is valuable; and although they do not rank among such as the Apostles, who were eye-witnesses of Christ and his miracles, they lived at a time when the evidences of the truth of the Christian religion might be easily traced to the first original. Irenæus, at this time a Presbyter in the church of Lyons, and afterwards Bishop, in his younger days was well acquainted with Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle John; and Pothinus, who had recently suffered martyrdom when ninety years of age, had doubtless been acquainted with some of the first Christians who flourished immediately after the death of some of those who, "from the beginning, were eye-witnesses and Ministers of the word." All were firmly persuaded of the truth and divine origin of the faith; they embraced it on the ground of such evidence as appeared to themselves as sufficient and satisfactory, and preferred it to their lives. "They believed, as they supposed, upon good ground, that Jesus Christ was a divine Teacher sent from God. They were, in particular, firmly persuaded of his doctrine concerning future rewards for the good, and punishments for the wicked; and were thereby engaged to the sincere profession of the truth, and the abhorrence of falsehood. Their knowledge of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and their respect for them, are manifest from their frequent allusions to them, or quotations from them. They seem to have had among them gifts of the Spirit. Eusebius says, 'They were not destitute of the grace of God, and the Holy Ghost was their Director.' Of Alexander the writers of the Lugdunensian Epistle say, 'He was known to almost all men for his boldness in preaching the word; for he was not destitute of apostolic grace.' They likewise say of Attalus, 'that after his first combat it was revealed to him that Alcibiades did not do well in not using the creatures of God; and Alcibiades acquiesced, and thenceforward partook of all sorts of food promiscuously.' And it may deserve to be considered that Attalus was a Roman citizen, and not a mean person. To me those expressions likewise appear remarkable, where they say of these confessors, 'They demonstrated, in fact, the power of martyrdom, using great freedom of speech in all their answers to the Gentiles, and manifesting a greatness of mind in their patience, fearlessness, and undaunted courage under all their sufferings.' Certainly the Christian sufferers had the presence of God with them. All men around them were adversaries; but God did not forsake

* The relation of the martyrdom of Symphorianus, says Neander, from whom the account is taken, is so simple in essentials, so little deformed by the customary exaggerations of later days, and so suitable to the circumstances of the times, that we cannot doubt that it is entirely founded on facts, although perhaps in some passages it may be laboured and rhetorical. Everything, however, conspires to prove that the event itself took place at a time not far distant from that of the persecution at Lyons and Vienne.

them; he strengthened and supported them." * Hence the sentiments of that fine writer, and excellent man, Joseph Addison: "I cannot omit what appears to me a standing miracle in the first three centuries; I mean, that amazing and supernatural courage and patience which were shown by innumerable multitudes of martyrs, in those slow and painful torments that were inflicted upon them. I cannot conceive a man placed in the burning iron chair of Lyons, amidst the insults and mockery of a crowded amphitheatre, and still keeping his seat; or, stretched upon a grate of iron over coals of fire, and breathing out his soul among the exquisite sufferings of such a tedious execution, rather than renounce his religion, and blaspheme his Saviour. Such trials seem to me above the strength of human nature, and able to overbear duty, reason, faith, conviction; nay, and the most absolute certainty of a future state. Humanity, unassisted in an extraordinary manner, must have shaken off the present pressure and delivered itself out of such a dreadful distress by any means that could have been suggested to it. We can easily imagine that many persons, in so good a cause, might have laid down their lives at the gibbet, the stake, or the block; but to expire leisurely amidst the most exquisite torments, when they might come out of them, even by a mental reservation, or a hypocrisy which is not without the possibility of being followed by repentance and forgiveness, has something in it so far beyond the force and natural strength of mortals, that one cannot but think there was some miraculous power to support the sufferer." †

"The superstitions," Milner observes, "which afterwards broke out with so much strength, and, like a dense fog, so long obscured the light of the church, appear not to have tarnished the glory of the Gallic martyrs. The case of Alcibiades, and the wholesome check which the providence of God put to his well-meant endeavours and austerities, demonstrate that excesses of this nature had not as yet gained any remarkable ascendancy in the church. And the description of the humility and charity of the martyrs shows a spirit much superior to that which we shall have occasion, with regret, to notice in some succeeding annals of martyrdom. In a word, the power of divine grace was little less than apostolical in the church at Lyons. The only disagreeable circumstance in the whole narrative is the too florid and tumid style peculiar to the Asiatic Greeks, and which Cicero, in his rhetorical works, so finely contrasts with the Attic neatness and purity. In a translation it seems scarce possible to do justice to thoughts extremely evangelical and spiritual, clothed originally in so tawdry a garb. Yet under this great disadvantage a discerning eye will see much of the unction of real godliness. At first sight we are struck with the difference between primitive scriptural Christianity, and that affectation of rational divinity which has so remarkably gained the ascendant in Christendom in our times.

* Lardner's Works, vol. vii., p. 174. 8vo. edit. London, 1831.
† Addison's Evidences of the Christian Religion, sect. vii.

In the account we have read, the good influence of the Holy Spirit on the one hand, and the evil influence of Satan on the other, are brought forward everywhere to our view. In our times both are concealed, or almost annihilated, and nothing appears but what is merely human. Which of the two methods is most agreeable to the Scripture must be obvious to every serious and honest inquirer. Christ's kingdom, in the narrative before us, appears, indeed, spiritual and divine; Christian faith, hope, and charity, do their work under the direction of his Spirit; Christians are humble, meek, heavenly-minded, patient, sustained continually with aid invisible, and you see Satan actively, but unsuccessfully, engaged against them. In modern Christian religion what a different taste and spirit! everything is of this world! Policy, ambition, the display and parade of learning and argument, the belief of Satanic influence ridiculed as weak superstition, and natural reason and self-sufficiency triumphing without measure, leave no room for the exhibition of the work of God, and the power of the Holy Ghost." *

It was during the period of the persecution in Lyons that Irenæus, a Presbyter of the church in that city, is first introduced to our notice. He had weathered the storm. He visited Rome, and found the Christian community in a state of suffering little inferior to that which he had recently witnessed at Gaul; and, indeed, if the Emperor acted upon the orders which he sent to his representative in France, there must have been several martyrdoms at Rome in the course of the same year. When Irenæus returned to Lyons, he would find the church without its spiritual head. Pothinus had been martyred; and the work of destruction had been so extensive, that some time would be required before the church could be restored to a state of tranquillity. Irenæus was appointed to succeed Pothinus; and if his other qualifications were equal to his learning, there could not have been a fitter person to preside over the church. But he was not destitute of trial. Persecution still lingered in the precincts of this hallowed spot. Among other martyrs who suffered, were Epipodius, a native of Lyons, and Alexander, who was either born in Greece, or descended from Grecian parents. They were brought up together, and had contracted a friendship for each other in their infancy, which increased with their years, and was cemented and improved by their union in the faith of Christ. They were in the flower of youth when the persecution began to rage at Lyons; and having witnessed the fury of the Heathens discharging itself on Pothinus, and his flock, they left the town privately, and retired to a neighbouring village, where they were concealed by a Christian widow, whose fidelity, and the comparative obscurity of the place, protected them for some time from harm. The malice of the persecutors was, however, indefatigable. They were discovered, and without any

* Milner's Hist. of the Church of Christ, vol. i., cent. ii., chap. vi., p. 262, 8vo. edit. York, 1794.

charge or examination were committed to prison, in order to await the doom which was preparing for them.

After three days had elapsed, they were brought bound before the Governor, and examined in the presence of a "great cloud" of idolaters, who, hearing them confess Christ, expressed their indignation in a loud and tumultuous manner. The Judge, who could not restrain his wrath, asked, what signified all the former executions, if there were allowed to remain those who still dared to confess Christ. Being resolved to exert all his ingenuity, in order to corrupt their integrity, he forbade them having any intercourse with each other, sent Alexander back to prison, and retained Epipodius, who was the youngest, in his own mansion, thinking that with him he might easily prevail. He manifested great kindness and concern at his condition. "Why," said he, "should you ruin yourself by your obstinacy?" and, as if to anticipate the answer of the youthful confessor, without waiting for a reply, proceeded to observe, that the Heathen deities were worshipped by the whole world, and also by the Princes who were the governors of it. "We," said he, "honour our gods with feasting and mirth, while you adore a man who was crucified, whose services are opposed to such engaging entertainments; who will not even allow his votaries the enjoyments and pleasures of life; and has declared against mirth, and all the pleasures of our senses, enjoins fasting, and recommends the barren virtue of chastity. What can you hope or expect from him, who could not secure himself from the insults and persecutions of the most contemptible of people? Consider this seriously, and leave this useless austerity, and enjoy the satisfaction of this world in a manner suitable to your age."

This deceptive reasoning was lost upon Epipodius, who replied, "The pretended compassion which you manifest does not affect me. A heart full of faith, and love to Christ, can never be moved by such discourse; what you esteem a tenderness to me, I deem cruelty, and what you recommend as an agreeable life, to me appears the way to certain and eternal death. You know not that Jesus Christ, after he had suffered, as you observe, arose from the dead, and prepared a life of immortality for all such as serve him truly. Man is most certainly composed of two substances, soul and body: our religion directs us to reduce the body under subjection, and to maintain the superiority of the soul: the feasts with which you honour your gods, may indeed afford some sensual gratification, some small satisfaction to the body; but destroy and murder the soul. How, then, can you call that life, which totally destroys the best part of a man, of which we take the greatest care? And when you have had your fill of pleasures, as you call them, and indulged your appetites with the most licentious freedom, the delightful scene ends in a miserable and comfortless death; whereas, though we suffer by your hands, our pains are succeeded by substantial and eternal happiness." This address of the youth being so full of reason and piety, and at the same time displaying so much courage and resolution, the angry Judge

ordered his mouth to be stopped with blows. This was speedily effected. Nevertheless, he shortly observed, "It is but reasonable that I should resign my soul to Him who created and redeemed me. This will not be dying, but passing to a better life." Here he was again interrupted, and stretched upon the rack, and two executioners were ordered to tear his flesh with iron hooks. The courage and tranquillity with which the holy martyr suffered these torments so enraged the people, that, with loud clamour, they demanded he might be given them to be stoned, or torn to pieces, as their fury should direct: upon which the Governor, fearing an insurrection, ordered him to be removed from the rack, and beheaded; which was immediately done.

Two days after this execution, Alexander was brought before the same Magistrate, who endeavoured to intimidate him also, by informing him of the number of martyrs he had made from among the Christians, and that he was almost the last of those who bore the hated name. But this, instead of intimidating, strengthened and encouraged Alexander to follow those who had gone before with greater alacrity and vigour. "You are mistaken," said he, "if you think it possible to extinguish the Christian name: our religion is built upon so solid a foundation, that the life of its votaries preserves it, and their death propagates it with great success. I own I am a Christian; and so will I continue to my last moment." The Governor, raging with fury at this undaunted resolution, ordered him to be stretched on the rack, and to be beaten by three executioners. Under this infliction he displayed neither impatience nor pain. Finding the holy youth invincible, the Magistrate commanded him to be crucified; and on account of the severity and number of the tortures to which he had already been exposed, Alexander soon expired. The bodies of these two youths were forbidden interment; but, not having been so strictly watched as in former cases, the believers found means to convey them away privily, and to give them decent sepulture. Among those also who sought safety in flight from the massacre at Lyons, Gregory of Tours * mentions Marcellus and Valerian, who travelled in different countries to provide for their own safety, and to preach the Gospel. Marcellus went into Basançon, where he was instrumental in bringing many to the obedience of the faith. The persecution following in his wake, he fled to Chalons; but, being personally known to many of the inhabitants, he avoided entering the city. All these precautions were unavailing; and he fell into the hands of Priscus, the Governor of the province, who was not ignorant of the character or profession of Marcellus, and, having him in his power, he gave directions that he should be tied to some branches of trees, bent for that purpose, and then they should be suddenly loosed, and in their endeavour to recover their natural position his body might be torn asunder. This sanguinary scheme proved abortive. He was afterwards conducted to

* Greg. Turensis. De Glor. Mart. cap., 54.

Chalons, where he was earnestly besought to assist at an idolatrous festival, or, perhaps, to partake of some food which had been offered to an idol; all which he resolutely refused to do. At length, finding him invincible, he was firmly fixed in the ground up to the middle, and in this manner he was buried alive. On the third day he expired.* Valerian did not remain long at large. Priscus, being informed that the companion of Marcellus was very indefatigable in his efforts to extend the truth, despatched a messenger to apprehend him. He was immediately subjected to the rack, and torn by iron hooks, accompanied with other unheard-of cruelties; none of which being able to induce him to alter his adherence to the Saviour, he was beheaded.†

The Emperor was now declining in years, and in hope of resting from his toils and labours, when news arrived of the Scythians and northern nations taking up arms again, and invading the empire with great appearance of success. This compelled Marcus Aurelius to make speedy preparations to oppose the enemy in person. Before he entered upon this campaign, he married his son Commodus to Crispina, the daughter of Beatius Valens, a man of consular dignity: he afterwards went to the temple of Bellona, and performed the ancient ceremony of the javelin.‡ The Romans, whose attachment to the Emperor daily increased, finding that he was ready to expose himself in a dangerous war, assembled before his palace, and besought him not to depart till he had given them some precepts for their conduct, so that, if the gods should take him to themselves, they might, by this assistance, continue in the paths of virtue into which he had

* The Papists are anxious to make it known, that the relics of Marcellus are honourably kept in the great church which bears his name at Chalons, and belongs to a royal monastery which King Gontran founded to his honour. A church was built at Tournus, over the tomb of Valerian, before the time of Gregory of Tours. Marcellus and Valerian are honoured as the Apostles of that country. The great Abbey of Valerian at Tournus is the head of a monastic congregation to which it gives its name. It was a small monastery when, in 875, Charles the Bald gave it to the Monks of the isle of Nermontier, or Ner, or Hero, on the coast of Poitou, who had been expelled by the Normans. They carried with them the relics of Filibert, or Filbert, their founder. This abbey was rebuilt in 1018, from which it took the name of Filbert. In the sixteenth age, the Huguenots plundered this church, and burnt part of the relics of Valerian; (!) but the principal portion escaped their sacrilegious search. The Abbey of Tournus was converted into a college of secular Canons in 1627, only the dignity of Abbot was retained with an extensive jurisdiction, and large revenue. It was enjoyed, *in commendam*, by Cardinal Fleury. (Alban Butler.)

† Others are mentioned as having suffered at the close of this reign:—Benignus, at Dijon; Speusippus and many others at Langres; Androches, Thyrseus, and Felix, at Salieu, near Autun; Sympovian and Florella, at Autun; Severinus, Felician, and Exuperus, at Vienna; Cecilia, at Sicily; Thraseas, a Bishop of Phrygia, at Smyrna. Accounts of some of the above are extant, all of which are much corrupted, and merit but little of the confidence of the reader.

‡ The Romans were accustomed to pay great respect to Bellona, the goddess of war. She is represented as preparing the chariot of Mars; and as appearing in battles, armed with a whip to animate the combatants, with dishevelled hair, and a torch in her hand. She was held in the greatest veneration by the Cappadocians, and chiefly at Comana, where she had above three thousand Priests. Her temple at Rome was near the Porta Carmentalis. In it the Senators gave audience to foreign Ambassadors, and to Generals returned from war. At the gate was a small column, called the "Column of war," against which they threw a spear whenever war was declared against an enemy.

led them by his example. In accordance with the wishes of the people, it is stated, that he spent three whole days in explaining to them some of the difficulties in morality, and in giving them brief maxims by which they might regulate their actions. Shortly after he marched at the head of his army, with his *hopeful* son, and gained considerable advantages over the enemy. Few particulars of this last expedition are extant: we learn that he fought many sanguinary battles, where his victories were invariably attributed to his prudence and bravery; that he was always at the head of his men, and in positions most exposed to danger; that he erected several strong holds, and thus kept the country in a state of awe; and was even meditating a third campaign, in which he hoped to complete the war, when a hand, more powerful than his own, arrested his proceedings: he was seized with a malignant fever at Vienna, which put a period to all his schemes and pursuits. "His purposes were broken off, even the thoughts of his heart."

Although Marcus Aurelius passed into eternity in the profession of those truths which had long been deeply engraven on his heart, his death was far from being tranquil and easy. The deluge of innocent Christian blood which had been shed with his sanction, and under his auspices, doubtless, added severity to the pangs which embittered his latter moments. His stoical submission to the stern decrees of Providence made him ready and willing to meet death; yet the love and care which he ever manifested toward the people, filled his mind with anxiety and fear. He beheld his northern conquests unsettled, his enemies still grasped the sword, and the people were inclined to revolt. The sharpest thorn which rendered uncomfortable his pillow, was the youth and unsteadiness of his son, who was open to temptation of the most licentious and boundless character, with the charm of unrestricted authority within his reach. This was the Emperor's most serious and distressing thought, and led him to say to his friends around him, that he feared the Roman empire would not be large enough to contain the vices of his son. Struggling with these difficulties, and fluctuating between hope and fear as his final hour approached, he requested his principal friends and officers to be gathered around his bed, and taking Commodus by the hand, he thus addressed the company: "You see before your eyes my son and successor, who, having scarcely entered the world, as in a tempestuous ocean, stands in need of the counsel of wise governors to secure him from the violence of youthful passions, which, like furious storms, may drive him into fatal calamities. Therefore, instead of one father, whom he must shortly lose, let him find many in you, to support his youth, and to impart such instructions as will be beneficial to him, and the public good. But more particularly make him sensible, that not all the riches and honours of the universe are sufficient to satisfy the luxury and ambition of tyrants; nor are the strongest guards and armies able to defend them from the hatred and insults of their subjects. Let him be assured, that no cruel and tyrannical Princes ever enjoy long and peaceable reigns, but only those who, by their mildness and clemency,

gain the hearts of their people. Tell him continually, that it is not they who serve out of constraint, but such as obey voluntarily, who continue faithful in all trials, and are free from either flattery or treachery; and let him know, that these are the only persons who never fall into disobedience, at least, until they are forced thereto by severe usage. At the same time do not fail to set before him, how exceedingly difficult, and yet how highly necessary, it is for those Princes to set bounds to their passions, that have none to their powers. If you instruct him in these truths, and incessantly cause him to recollect what he has heard, besides the satisfaction of forming a good Prince for yourselves and the whole empire, you will have the comfort of paying to my memory the noblest of all your service, since by that means you will render it immortal." As he was uttering these words, he was seized with faintness, which deprived him of the use of his voice, and on the following day of his life. Happy would it have been for himself, for the Christian community, and for the empire, if such sentiments had formed the rule of his conduct during his eventful reign. But alas! they did not!

During the second campaign of Marcus Aurelius with the Marcomanni we have no reason to believe that the persecution of the Christians entirely ceased in any part of that period. We find also from Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, who wrote his work to Autolycus soon after the death of Marcus, that the sufferings of the Christians were not over. In our subsequent chapter we shall also discover that they existed at the commencement of the following reign: every circumstance, therefore, in the history of the deceased Emperor justifies the conclusion, that Marcus Aurelius was determinately hostile to the spread of the religion of Christ, and left untried no measures by which he could achieve its complete destruction. Dr. Burton gives reasons why he hesitates to class Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius among the systematic and resolute persecutors of the church. "The Christians," says he, "suffered in different parts of the empire during all these reigns; but there were no definite persecutions which could be traced to the edicts of the Emperors. Nero and Domitian are always considered to have obtained this disgraceful distinction. Trajan has also been said to have instituted the third persecution, and the fourth has sometimes been ascribed to Hadrian; but other writers have made Marcus Aurelius the fourth persecutor, so that Antoninus Pius escapes without this obloquy being attached to his name. I have perhaps said enough to show, that we cannot speak of ten persecutions, according to the common notion, nor of any definite number; but the three Emperors mentioned above were rather favourable to the Christians by their edicts than otherwise. We can hardly say the same of Marcus Aurelius, who called himself a philosophical Emperor, and who was not without amiable qualities, according to the notions of that day. The mention made by himself, of his having received religious impressions very early from his mother, might give us a favourable idea of both of them. His philosophy, which was of the Stoical school, was perhaps one cause of

his despising the Christians. Apollonius,* whose lectures were attended by the Emperor before and after his accession, was strongly opposed to the new religion. The Emperor mentions another person, named Diognetus, who had taught him to have no faith in incantations, the exorcising of evil spirits, or any pretended wonders of that kind; and he most probably included the Christians among the numerous impostors of the day. There is reason to believe that the celebrated orator, Fronto, from whom the Emperor had taken lessons in eloquence, published a work which contained calumnies against the Christians; and we may say, generally, that it was not till the present reign that the philosophers began to attend with any seriousness to the doctrines of Christianity. Marcus Aurelius was himself a philosopher; and we may say in his defence, that the increasing demoralization of the people made them more impatient of any restraint in their thirst for Christian blood. The Emperor ought to have restrained them; but his edicts rather followed, than led, the wishes of his subjects. We have seen that nearly the whole of his reign was a continued series of persecutions; and he cannot be acquitted of making it more easy for the enemies of the Christians to gratify their malice. He must in many ways have become acquainted with the new doctrines; but, like his master Apollonius, he was determined not to listen to them; and his own writings furnish a proof of the prejudice with which he viewed the holy martyrs. Speaking of the soul being ready to quit the body at any time, if required, he says that it ought to be an act of specific deliberation, and not the result of mere obstinacy, as is the case with the Christians. On the whole, we must say, that the condition of the church was much worse at the end of his reign than at the beginning; and the name of Marcus Aurelius, though conspicuous among philosophers, has also an eminent place among the opponents of the Gospel."†

The brutal Commodus succeeded to the empire when only nineteen years of age, and immediately made a treaty with the different German nations with whom he had been at war; and, having accomplished this in a manner which was far from being satisfactory to the army, he hurried to Rome. The persecution which was raging in several of the provinces when the late Emperor died, continued for some time to exist; and from time to time was revived on account of the personal hostility of the Emperors, not the mature and delibe-

* He lived in the reign of Antoninus Pius, who invited him to come from Chalcis to Rome for the purpose of instructing his adopted son, Marcus Aurelius, in philosophy. On his arrival at Rome the Emperor summoned him to the palace, that he might introduce his son to him; but Apollonius answered, that a pupil ought to come to his master, and not the master to his pupil. He is censured for his avarice. From a passage in Lucian we must infer that he came to Rome with a crowd of pupils; and Demonax, who was then with the Emperor, wittily said, "Lo, lo, there comes Apollonius with his Argonauts," alluding to Apollonius, the author of Argonautica. (See Dion Cassius, lib. lxxi., cap. 35; Mar. Antoninus, De Rebus Suis, lib. i., cap. 8; Julius Capitolinus; Antoninus Pius, 10; and Luciani Demonax, 31.)

† Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xx.

rate policy of a regular and permanent government. The notorious vices and detestable characters of the persecutors tended to vindicate the innocence of Christianity, and enlisted the sympathies of mankind in its favour, rather than strengthened the general animosity. Some of the rulers were almost as much strangers to the gods, as to the people and Senate of Rome. Many seemed to take a reckless delight in violating the ancient majesty of the Roman religion. Foreign superstitions, almost equally new, and scarcely less offensive to the general sentiment, received the public, the pre-eminent, homage of the Emperor. Commodus, though the Grecian Hercules was at once his model, his type, and his deity, was an ardent votary of the Isiac mysteries; and while Marcus Aurelius endeavoured to form the *beau ideal* of a perfect man, in the highest possible personification of human reason, the licentious Commodus trampled upon his precepts, and mocked his efforts, by rushing headlong into the wild barbarities and filthy excesses of savage life. Nevertheless, it is generally acknowledged that the reign of Commodus was less injurious to the interests of the church, than those of his immediate successors. This may appear paradoxical; but the stubborn fact exists. The Christians suffered more when enlightened and philosophical Princes swayed the sceptre, than from an individual whose character and career were a perpetual exhibition of sensuality and cruelty. The government of Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius was comparatively mild; and so long as their subjects interfered not with the affairs of the state, they did what appeared to be right in their own eyes, and derived amusement and satisfaction from persecuting the church of God. Commodus treated his subjects as they had treated the Christians, and put them to death with as great indifference as others would destroy vermin; so that while the Romans were daily and hourly expecting the blow to fall upon themselves, they had little leisure, and less inclination, to molest the church. The Emperor, also, was no idolatrous devotee: the four preceding Emperors had professed great attachment to the national faith; but Commodus did not even keep up the semblance of outward respect to the gods of his country; the temples were converted by him into scenes of debauchery and bloodshed; and we may judge of the disgust which was raised by such profanations, when we find the Senate insulting him, after his death, as the enemy of the gods, and the violator of the temples. It was not likely, therefore, that he would regard any representations which might be made to him concerning the alarming increase of Christianity; and when he proceeded to personate Hercules, and to exact divine honours, he strengthened the arguments of the Christians, who had been long exposing the impieties and absurdities of Heathenism. The state of the church gradually became ameliorated; and Eusebius confidently speaks of increasing peace * throughout the world, and of many persons of rank embracing Christianity in the city of Rome.

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. v., cap. 21.

After all, we do not learn that Commodus introduced any relaxation in the laws respecting Christianity, which were frequently employed by interested or superstitious Magistrates for the oppression of the Christians. The insignificance of the abandoned Emperor, little as he can have cared for Christianity, must have been of advantage to the faithful in procuring for them a time of refreshment and repose after their sufferings under Marcus Aurelius. Everything which had a tendency to desecrate, and to bring into contempt, the popular religion before the more intellectual and enlightened part of the community, strengthened the cause of Christianity; and the more the weaker parts of Paganism, and those most alien to the prevailing spirit of the times, were obtruded upon the public view, the more they must have contributed to the advancement of that faith which was rapidly attaining to the full growth of a rival to the established religion.* An event occurred in the year 183, which operated favourably in reference to the Christian church, though the circumstances connected therewith were highly disgraceful and wicked. Commodus had been married to Crispina in the year before he set out with his father for the German war; and this woman, after she became Empress, was convicted of adultery. She was banished to the island of Capreæ, and her place was supplied by more than one mistress in the Emperor's court. One of them was Marcia, who had lived before with Quadratus, but not as his wife; and when Quadratus was put to death by Commodus, she married Eclectus, who had been his Chamberlain; but this did not hinder her from forming the same illicit connexion with the Emperor, which she had before carried on with her husband's master. Such a complication of depravity becomes still more extraordinary, when we are told that Marcia was a Christian. The evidence seems unquestionable that she had been converted to the Gospel; but, as too often happens, she allowed her passions to get the better of her principles. The case would be perplexing, if we did not see similar instances, where all the parties profess to be believers; and if any persons object to the Gospel, that it did not restrain this woman from her licentious conduct, we can only complain of the unfairness which looks for different results in the second century from those which are produced in the nineteenth. Marcia appears to have so far retained her belief in Christianity, that she extended her influence to all the professors of it. She was the favourite mistress of Commodus, and received from him almost all the marks of respect which were given to a wife. This enabled her to show many acts of kindness to the Christians; and, it is a singular feature in the history of the church, that it was indebted for this first instance of royal favour to the adulterous paramour of an unfeeling and bloodthirsty tyrant.† Thus did "the earth help the woman."

Accusations against the Christians were not received as before: they

* Milman's History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 204.
† Burton's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, lect. xx.

were, notwithstanding, exposed to persecution from any Governor who might individually be hostile to Christianity. Hence Apollonius was martyred. The Proconsul of Asia Minor, Arrius Antoninus, also, commenced a persecution; but a great multitude of Christians from the town in which the persecution began, flocked to the tribunal in order to deter the officer from this measure by their numbers; a consummation they might fairly hope for under a government, where the persecution proceeded from individuals and not from the imperial throne. Irenæus, who wrote during this reign, says, that the Christians frequented the imperial court, and that they were partakers in all the usual advantages of the Roman empire; that they might go by land or by sea wherever they were inclined;* and yet, this same Irenæus also affirms, that the church at all times, from which he does not except those in which he wrote, was constantly sending many martyrs to heaven.† This apparent contradiction is easily solved. "There were about this time at Rome," says John Foxe, "Vincentius, Eusebius, Peregrinus, and Potentianus, learned men and instructors of the people, who, following the steps of the Apostles, went about from place to place, where the Gospel was not yet preached, converting the Gentiles to the faith of Christ. These, hearing of the madness of the Emperor and of the people, began to reprove their idolatrous blindness, teaching in villages and towns all that heard them to believe upon the one triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and to come away from such worshipping of devils; and to give honour to God alone, who only is to be worshipped; willing them to repent, and to be baptized, lest they perish with Commodus. With this their preaching, they converted one Julius, a Senator, and others, to the religion of Christ. The Emperor, hearing thereof, caused them to be apprehended by Vitellius, his Captain, and to be required to sacrifice unto Hercules and Jupiter; which when they stoutly refused, after divers grievous torments and great miracles by them done, at last they were pressed with leaden weights to death. This Peregrinus had been sent before by Sixtus, Bishop of Rome, into the parts of France, to supply there the room of a Bishop and teacher; for by reason of the continual and horrible persecutions thereabout touched, those places were left desolate and destitute of Ministers and instructors; where after he had occupied himself with much fruit among the flock of Christ, and had established the church there, returning home again to Rome, there he finished at last his martyrdom. Now remaineth, likewise, to speak of Julius, who, being a Senator of Rome, and now won by the preaching of these blessed men to the faith of Christ, did often invite them and bring them home to his house; and being by them more fully instructed in the Christian religion, he believed the Gospel; and, sending for one Ruffinus, a Priest, was with all his family baptized: he did not (as the common sort was wont to do) keep close and secret his faith, but, incensed with a marvellous and sincere zeal, openly professed the same; altogether wishing and

* Irenæi Opera, Adv. Hæres., lib. iv., cap. 30. † Ibid., lib. iv., cap. 33.

praying it to be given to him by God, not only to believe in Christ, but also to hazard his life for him. Which thing the Emperor hearing, how that Julius had forsaken his old religion and become a Christian, forthwith sent for him, to come before him; unto whom he spake on this wise: 'O Julius, what madness hath possessed thee, that thus thou dost fall from the old and common religion of thy forefathers, who acknowledged and worshipped Jupiter and Hercules as their gods, and now dost embrace this new and fond religion of the Christians?' At which time Julius, having good occasion to show and open his faith, gave straightway account thereof to him, and affirmed that Hercules and Jupiter were false gods; and how the worshippers of them would perish with eternal damnation and punishments. The Emperor, hearing how that he condemned and despised his gods, being then inflamed with a great wrath, (as he was by nature very choleric,) committed him forthwith to Vitellius, the Captain of the guard, a very cruel and fierce man, either to see Julius sacrifice to mighty Hercules, or, refusing the same, to slay him. Vitellius exhorted Julius to obey the Emperor's commandment, and to worship his gods, alleging how that the whole empire of Rome was not only constituted, but also preserved and maintained, by them. This Julius utterly refused to do, at the same time sharply admonishing Vitellius to acknowledge the true God, and to obey his commandments, lest he, with his master, should die some grievous death; whereat Vitellius being moved, caused Julius with cudgels to be beaten to death."*

The days of Commodus were numbered. He was destitute of every good quality which could secure for him the esteem and respect of his subjects. His degraded tastes, fostered as they had been by the example and indulgence of his mother, and left unchecked by his father, led him to associate with the lowest of the people. The people, amidst the sufferings which they endured from his horrible tyranny, instead of being led to impute their disasters to the offended gods, had too obvious a cause in the abuses of government; and their rage was directed, not against the Christians, but against the tyrant

* Foxe's Actes and Monuments, vol. i., p. 149. 8vo. Edit. Seeley. "The Martyrologies speak of a Senator named Julius, who was put to death in this reign for refusing to sacrifice; and Lampridius names Julius Proculus among the many Senators who were murdered by Commodus; but whether they were the same person, or whether any Christian of that name was martyred, must remain uncertain. We must say the same of a partial persecution, which Baronius supposes to have taken place in the year 190. Commodus is known to have given a splendid exhibition of games in that year, which was the fifteenth anniversary of his assuming the proconsular power; and he insisted upon divine honours being paid to himself, under the character and in the garb of Hercules. Many persons were put to death for laughing at this extravagant absurdity, and the Martyrologies speak of some Christians who shared the same fate. The account is by no means improbable, though it rests on little authority; and we may add, that the present year was likely to set the populace against the Christians, on account of some severe visitations which befell the city. The whole of Italy was suffering from a pestilence, which, as is often the case, was followed in Rome by a scarcity of food. Many public buildings were also destroyed by fire; and if Commodus put the Christians to death for refusing to worship him as Hercules, he might easily persuade the people that such victims would avert the anger of the gods." (Dr. E. Burton.)

himself and his guilty ministers. Conspiracies and rebellions, also, occupied the general attention during various parts of his reign; and, from all these circumstances, the Christians were but little molested. He wallowed in all manner of excess and luxury. Instead of being called Commodus, the son of Antoninus, he gave directions that he should be styled Hercules, the son of Jupiter: consequently, he abandoned the Roman and imperial costume, and clothed himself in a lion's skin, and carried about a large club. In this strange garb he appeared in public, to the derision of many, and indignation of others. It is said, that, in order to imitate Hercules in the destruction of giants and monsters, he collected the sick and maimed of Rome, and directed something similar to the feet of dragons to be affixed to their knees, such as the poets feigned the giants had; he then armed them with sponges instead of stones to throw at him, and afterwards fell furiously upon them, and slew them with his club.* He commanded many statues of himself to be erected throughout the city, and one in the front of the Senate-house, in the form of an archer with his bow bent, so that his very image might strike terror into the beholders. He caused the head of a vast colossus to be taken off, and one to be removed from a statue of himself, which bore no proportion to it in size, to be placed upon it. One day at a public solemnity, supposing that he had been derided by the people, he was transported with rage, and gave orders to massacre the multitude who were present, and to burn the city; which would have been accomplished, had not the Captain of the guard persuaded him to the contrary. He now became so ungovernable as to forsake his palace, and take up his residence in a fencing-school; and, becoming weary of the name of Hercules, he assumed that of a celebrated gladiator who was deceased: in a word, his actions had rendered him utterly odious and insupportable to the state, and contemptible and offensive to the people. At length, on the feast of Janus, he resolved to march out of the fencing-school, habited not as an Emperor, but as a common gladiator, and display his powers before the public. This expedited his end: for, this outrageous determination becoming known to his friends, his paramour Marcia, his General Lætus, and his Chamberlain Eclectus, endeavoured by argument and entreaty to divert him from so mean and dishonourable a purpose. Being exceedingly incensed against them, he commanded them to depart; and, retiring into his chamber at noon, as was his custom, he wrote the names of the above persons in his tablet, to be put to death that evening. After these followed the names of many of the Senators, whose property was to be confiscated, and distributed among the gladiators and soldiers, to purchase mirth and licentiousness from the former, defence and security from the latter. Little suspecting that any would have the temerity to enter the apartment, he laid the fated document on the couch, and went into the bath. A little boy whom he passionately loved, innocently took up the writing to amuse himself with it, and leaving the

* Dion. Cass. Hist., lib. lxxii., p. 827.

room was met by Marcia, who took it from him, supposing it to be writing of another kind. Becoming, however, acquainted with the deadly contents, she forthwith discovered to Lætus and Eclectus their common danger, who resolved to purchase their own security by the death of the tyrant; they also concluded upon despatching the monster by poison, which was speedily administered by the hands of Marcia herself. The power of the draught threw Commodus into a heavy slumber; but awaking soon after, and being seized with a violent vomiting, Marcia and the rest of the conspirators, fearing that the deleterious drug would be rejected, hastily called to their aid Narcissus, a stout young man, to whom they exhibited the writing, pointed to his own name among those who were doomed to die, and promised great rewards if he would immediately despatch the Emperor. Narcissus was by no means loath, and the wretched victim was strangled and slain by his nearest friends. Such was the miserable end of Commodus, in the thirty-first year of his age, after an impious reign of about thirteen years; a Prince, as Lampridius says, who lived only for his subjects' mischief, and his own shame; * and as he most resembled Domitian in his life and conduct, so also in his violent death, which sanguinary tyrants seldom escape.†

* "Commodus," says a contemporary writer, "was the first Emperor that was born in his father's reign, and the second that received the empire as a paternal inheritance. He had been spoiled in his youth by his mother Faustina, a woman of very violent passions and sanguinary temper, who corrupted her son's mind both by precept and example. His debaucheries exceeded those of all his predecessors in extravagance and iniquity: even his own sisters became the victims of his lust; and one of them, having reproached him, was murdered by his hand. All his sports were cruel: he loved to roam through the streets, wounding and slaying the unsuspicious passengers; he frequently contended with gladiators on the public stage, and delighted to display feats of strength; for his muscular powers were unrivalled. But he showed no disposition for foreign war; on the contrary, he concluded a peace with the Quadi and Marcomanni, abandoning the territories that had been conquered by his father. An attempt made to assassinate this monster in the third year of his reign, stimulated his natural cruelty to the most savage excess: his assailant, aiming a blow at him with a dagger, exclaimed, 'The Senate sends thee this!' and though the murder was prevented by the prompt interference of the guards, the words sank deep into the Emperor's breast, and thenceforward he showed inveterate suspicion and hatred to the whole body of Senators. Scarcely had he escaped this danger, when he was exposed to one more formidable, arising from the war of the deserters. A common soldier named Maternus, guilty of the unusual crime of abandoning his colours, assembled a band of robbers in Gaul, and, being joined by profligates from every part of the empire, pillaged and laid waste that province. Being reduced to great straits by the exertions of Pescennius Niger, Maternus divided his men into several small bands, and marched privately with them by different ways into Italy, designing to murder Commodus at a public festival, and in the confusion seize the empire. The conspirators reached Rome in safety; but just as the plot was on the point of exploding, they were betrayed by their accomplices, arrested, and put to death. An alarming insurrection of the Roman populace, directed not so much against the Emperor as his Minister Cleander, was produced by the exhortations of an unknown woman. The prætorian horse charged the multitude, but were defeated with loss, as cavalry generally are when acting against a mob in narrow streets. Commodus, alarmed by the tumult, sacrificed his Minister, and the fury of the Romans was appeased." (Taylor's Student's Manual.)

† Echard's Roman History, vol. ii., p. 351. Sixth Edit. 8vo. London, 1719.

CHAPTER V.

Competitors for the Throne—Pertinax—Julianus—Niger, Albinus, and Severus—The Emperor appears favourable to the Christians—Who are still persecuted—Clement of Alexandria—Circumstance calculated to win the Esteem of Severus—Proculus—Evodus—Training of young Caracalla—In early Life his Disposition was amiable—Christians protected—Tertullian—Severus angry with the Senate of Rome—Discord in the Church—Theodotus excommunicated by Victor—The Heresy imputed to him—Escaped Martyrdom by abjuring the Truth—Controversy respecting the Paschal Feast—Intolerance of Victor—Heresies—Montanus—Præxeas—Fidelity of Zephyrinus—Evil Tendency of Errors—Priscilla and Maximilla—The Wars of Severus—Commences a Persecution of the Christians—Character of Victor—Historical Sketch of the early African Churches—Synods of Africa—Fierce Nature of an Attack of the Emperor on Christianity—Tertullian's spirited Apology for Christianity—Sufferers in the Persecution—Leonidas—Notices of Origen—His Character and Predilections—Ammonius Saccas—His Philosophy—Numerous Martyrs, Pupils of Origen—Potamiæna, Marcella, and Basilides—Milner's Remarks upon their History—The Corruption and Interpolation of Martyrologies—Saturninus—Martyrs of Scillita—Their Examination and Execution—The Carthaginian Martyrs—Perpetua, Felicitas, and others—Sketch of the History of Irenæus—His supposed Martyrdom—Sufferings of the Lugdunensian Christians—Severus more bitterly afflicts the Church—Visits Britain, and dies in York—State of the Church at the Death of Severus—Minutius Felix—Tertullian—Corrupt Practices among the Christians—Peter Martyr of Alexandria—Means employed to depreciate Christianity—Julia Severa—Philostratus—Apollonius of Tyana—His Character—Specimen of his Miracles—Caracalla and Geta—Persecution for a Time continued—Lenity of the Emperor towards the Church—His horrid Cruelties, and violent Death—Short Reign of Macrinus—Heliogabalus succeeds to the Throne—His Character—Mammæa—The Worship of the Sun—State of Christianity, and the Paganism of Rome—Comparative Tranquillity of the Church—The Cause of it—Popular Tumults adverse to the Christian—Martyrdom of Cecilia, Valerian, and others—Ado, the Martyrologist—Legendary Tale recorded by Alban Butler—Death of Heliogabalus, who is succeeded by Alexander Severus—His Character when compared with that of his Predecessor—Was kindly affected towards the Christians—Mammæa—Opinions respecting her—Was not a Believer in Christ—Eclecticism—Alexander's tolerant Disposition—Attachment to Gospel Precepts—Erection of Buildings for Christian Worship—Persecution during the Reign of Alexander, how accounted for—Character of Ulpian—His Death—Conjectures respecting Callistus—Catacombs of Callistus—Urban—His Martyrdom—Agapetus—Tragical End of a Persecutor—Other Martyrs recorded by Foxe.

We need not trace the political storms of the Roman empire which immediately followed the death of Commodus, to ascertain the situation of the church. The year 193 witnessed the accession of three Emperors, besides two pretenders to that dignity. Helvius Pertinax, who had been Prefect of the city of Rome, was killed by the prætorian guards before he had held the sceptre three months. Didius Julianus, who purchased the throne by offering to the same soldiers two hundred and fifty pieces of gold each, survived his bargain only two months; for as soon as his accession was known, three persons declared themselves competitors,—Piscennius Niger in Syria, Clodius

Albinus in Britain, and L. Septimius Severus in Pannonia,—which ended in the sovereignty of the last. He was now forty-seven years old, having been born at Leptis in Africa. His education had been literary as well as military; and, as Dr. Burton observes, "we might view his character with more interest, though with much more abhorrence, if it could be proved that he was the Governor of the province who tortured the martyrs of Lyons, in the year 177. It is certain that he held that station, but most probably at a later period." * These national convulsions, like all other public calamities, could not be favourable to the Christians. Severus was at one time the protector, and at another, the persecutor, of Christianity; and the fury of the populace, or the malice of individual Governors, subjected the church to innumerable privations and acts of violence. Clement of Alexandria, who wrote shortly after the death of Commodus, says, "We see daily many martyrs burnt, crucified, and beheaded before our eyes." † Two circumstances appear to have rendered the Emperor favourably disposed to the Christians at the commencement of his reign, and of which they did not hesitate to avail themselves. A Christian named Proculus—a dependent, probably, upon his favourite freed slave Evodus—had been so fortunate as to restore him to health by anointing him with oil, and was received into the imperial family, in which he retained an honourable situation till his death; ‡ and it is by no means improbable that, through the same connexion, a Christian nurse and a Christian preceptor formed the disposition of the young Caracalla; and, till the natural ferocity of his character ripened under the fatal influence of jealous ambition, fraternal hatred, and unbounded power,—the gentleness of his manners and the sweetness of his temper enchanted and attached his family, his friends, the Senate, and the people of Rome. The populace beheld with satisfaction the infant pupil of Christianity turning aside his head, and weeping at the barbarity of the ordinary public spectacles, in which criminals were exposed to wild beasts.§ The Christian interest at the court repressed the occasional outbreaks of popular animosity; many individuals of rank had become "obedient to the faith," and enjoyed the favour of the Emperor. Another circumstance which tended, in a considerable degree, to throw a temporary shield of protection around the church, was the fact that the Christians refused, during the conflict of parties, to espouse the cause either of Niger or Albinus, but rendered prompt and cheerful obedience to the ruling Monarch. For this we are indebted to the evidence of Tertullian.‖ This, however, does not tell to their credit or discredit; for when the empire was vacant, the legions in Syria had as good a right to set up an Emperor as those in Pannonia; but, if Tertullian be correct as to

* Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxi., p. 210.

† Clem. Alex. Opera, tom. i., Stromat., lib. ii., sect. xx., p. 494. Fol. Venet., 1757.

‡ "Proculum Christianum qui Torpacion cognominabatur, Evodea procuratorem, qui eum per oleum aliquando curaverat, requisivit, et in palatio suo habuit usque ad mortem ejus." (Tertull. ad Scapulam, sect. 4.)

§ Æl. Spartian. Antonin. Caracall.

‖ Tertulliani Opera, ad Scapulam, sect. ii., Apologet. adv. Gent., sect. xxxv.

the circumstance, the Christians were likely to profit by the event, when Severus had killed his rival, and was inquiring into the persons who had supported him. The Jews, indeed, appear to have applied to Niger for a remission of their tribute, which he refused to grant them; and they could get no better terms from Severus: but there is reason to think that the Heathen had by this time learned to distinguish between the Christians and the Jews; and if Severus felt any displeasure against the latter, he may for that very reason have favoured the Christians.* The implacable vengeance which the Emperor wreaked on the Senate, for their real or suspected inclination to the party of Albinus, and his remorseless execution of so many of the noblest of the aristocracy, may have placed in a stronger light the happier fortune, and commended the unimpeachable loyalty, of the Christians.

This patch of sunshine, which occasionally appeared on the surface of the church, was not of long duration: it was soon removed by internal discord. A writer who lived not long after this period mentions Theodotus as having been excommunicated by Victor, Bishop of Rome, for asserting that Christ was a mere man;† and Epiphanius informs us that Theodotus was a native of Byzantium, and that, being brought before the Governor of the city, in the time of some persecution, and examined, together with several others, on the charge of being a Christian, he denied his faith, and so escaped the death which was inflicted upon the rest.‡ It is probable that this event transpired in his native city, and during some part of the three years' siege which it sustained from the forces of Severus. Tertullian informs us, that when the city was taken, Cæcilius congratulated the Christians;§ from which it is inferred, that they had been previously in a state of suffering. It seems most probable that Cæcilius had himself been harassing them for not taking arms in favour of Niger. We must suppose, says Dr. Burton, that the inhabitants espoused the same side with the army, or the city would not have held out so long; and when their cause began to be desperate, it was very likely that they would wreak their vengeance upon the Christians, who refused to take up arms. It was while many of his companions were suffering martyrdom, that Theodotus denied his belief in Christ; and so far, for a while, he escaped. But when the city was taken, and the Christians were freed from danger by the presence of the victorious army, some of them reproached Theodotus for his shameful cowardice. He then went to Rome, and was for some time unnoticed; but being recognised, and again taunted for his apostacy, he defended himself by saying, that he had not denied God, but man; evidently meaning to say, that he believed Christ to be a mere man. This impiety was brought to the ears of Victor, who expelled him from the communion of his church.‖

* Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxi.
† Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. v., cap. 28.
‡ Epiphan. Hæres., liv.
§ Tertulliani Opera, ad Scapulam, sect. iii., tom. ii., p. 19. Wirceb., 1781
‖ Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxi.

The defection of Theodotus * was followed by the celebrated controversy about the paschal festival, which had continued to divide some part of the Eastern and Western churches ever since the days of Polycarp. The mildness which characterized the proceedings of that Bishop had not been continued, and the dispute was running high at this period. Several meetings of the Clergy had been held, and numerous Councils convened, the result of whose deliberations was, that the churches of Asia Minor adhered to the Jewish method of observing the paschal festival on the fourteenth day of the first month; whereas all the other churches kept it on the day before the Sunday on which they celebrated our Lord's resurrection. The Asiatic churches defended themselves by the authority of the Apostles John and Philip, and by the more recent examples of Polycarp and other martyrs; and Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, wrote to Victor and the Roman church in a firm, though charitable, tone, and stated their determination to adhere to the custom of their ancestors. This epistle was received with considerable *hauteur* by the Bishop of Rome, who immediately endeavoured to induce all the other churches to exclude those of Asia Minor from their communion. In this arbitrary measure he was unsupported. He then, in a manner not to be mistaken, declared that the church of Rome would not commune with the churches of Asia. In what this communion consisted, we may easily imagine: when a Christian of one city went to another, he would naturally wish to join in the administration of the Lord's supper, inasmuch as it was a sign of their holding one common faith; beside which, they had the custom of sending a portion of the consecrated elements from one diocess to another, in token of peace; † and Victor appears to have cut off the Asiatic churches from any communion of this kind. The sequel shows how entirely the church of Rome at this time was destitute of any pre-eminence or authority over other churches; for they not only refused to follow the example of Rome, but some of them wrote to Victor, impressing upon him the necessity of "unity and godly love," and rebuking him sharply for his manifest want of it.‡

Numerous heresies vexed the church at the close of the second century; that of Montanus § had been gaining ground for several

* "It seems strange to our present notions, that Theodotus was by trade a dresser of leather, and yet a man of considerable learning. Such, however, was the fact. He had studied the Greek philosophy, and was himself an author; but he and his followers are charged with altering some of the books of the Old and New Testament." (Burton.)

† This custom was suppressed by the Council of Laodicea, A.D. 367, or A.D. 372 can. xiv.

‡ Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxi.

§ This heresy sprang up about the year 171, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. Montanus was a Phrygian by birth, and is said to have embraced Christianity in the hope of rising to the dignities of the church. He pretended to inspiration, and declared that the Holy Ghost had instructed him in several points which had not been revealed to the Apostles. Priscilla and Maximilla, two enthusiastic women of Phrygia, presently became his disciples, and in a short time he had a great number of followers. The Bishops of Asia, being assembled, condemned his prophecies, and excommunicated those that propagated them. They afterwards wrote an account of these transactions to the Western churches, who likewise condemned the heresy. The Montanists, finding themselves exposed to the censure of the whole Christian community, formed a

years, and appears to have disturbed the peace of the Christian community, not only in Asia Minor, but in other parts of the world. The heads of the church had been decidedly averse to the vagaries which that enthusiast promulgated; nevertheless, multitudes of both sexes believed him and his associates to be divinely inspired; so that while the former were thundering forth anathemas against the heretic, his followers were retorting, by describing their opponents as wholly destitute of the influences of the Holy Spirit. Numerous individuals of distinction engaged in this controversy. Closely allied to this, was the heresy of Praxeas, who is stated to have been first a follower of Montanus, but whom he abjured. He embraced doctrines similar to those of Sabellius on the subject of the Trinity, and denied that the Son and the Holy Ghost were distinct persons,—representing them as merely modes or operations of the one Being called God. Praxeas uses the language of a modern Unitarian, and speaks of himself as the worshipper of one God; whereas his opponents believed in two or three. Tertullian, with great force, exposed this fallacy; and probably induced, by his writings, the subsequent Bishop, Zephyrinus, to condemn his opinions. These various disagreements among the brethren tended greatly to diminish the unity and moral power of the faithful, and to strengthen the hands of their numerous adversaries, who were eager to embrace every opportunity that offered to weaken, annoy, and persecute the church.

In the mean while, Severus, who had extricated himself from all danger of a rival to the throne in the East, turned his attention to Gaul, where Albinus, another competitor for the empire, had ensconced himself, and was waiting his arrival. A battle was fought in the neighbourhood of Lyons, about the year 198, and the Emperor was victorious, and his opponent slain. In the congratulations and festivities which followed, the Christians doubtless refused to take part, on account of the immoralities and impiety which invariably accompanied them; and therefore they were sure to experience the insults and hostility of the Heathen, though we have not much evidence that the Christian church, as a whole, suffered greatly during the first six years of the reign of Severus. In the year 199 the Emperor appears to have set out to make war with the Parthians, and during his absence the Christians are said to have suffered greatly at Rome; if so, the Emperor must be acquitted from any share therein: but times of trouble were returning. In the ninth year of Severus, Victor * was succeeded in the bishopric of Rome by Zephyrinus, who

schism, of which Montanus, in conjunction with Priscilla and Maximilla, was at the head. These sectaries made no alteration in their creed: they only held that the Holy Spirit made Montanus his organ for delivering a more perfect form of discipline than what was delivered by the Apostles. They refused communion to those who had been guilty of notorious crimes, considered it unlawful to fly in times of persecution, and condemned second marriages.

* Victor, Bishop of Rome, is by many said to have suffered martyrdom; but by what means, it is not related. That notorious martyr-monger, Alban Butler, hesitates to give this imperious Priest that honour. He says, "Victor died in the year 201, the ninth of Severus, after he had sat ten years. He is styled a martyr by some writers of the fifth age, and in an ancient Pontifical written in 530. Though Severus only published the edict for his persecution in 202, several Christians had suffered in his reign

had much less peaceful times to grapple with than his predecessor. Severus returned from his Parthian campaign into Syria in 202, and subsequently to Alexandria; and, from some cause or other, had been highly offended with the Jews, and threatened to inflict a severe penalty on any person who might embrace their religion; but what led him to include Christianity in that decree, we know not. We have not heard of any offence which the Christians had committed, and we are aware that the Heathen had been learning gradually to distinguish them from the Jews; but the persecution seems to have raged so violently when the signal was once given, that, as Dr. Burton suggests, we are to look for no other cause than that the Heathen had become impatient to renew their former attacks, and could no longer bear to see the progress which the Gospel was every where making.

"The voice of Africa," says a modern historian, "has been for centuries silent amid the Christian communities of the earth; her candlestick removed, and her light extinguished: but there was a period, and that for centuries, when Northern Africa occupied no subordinate station in ecclesiastical rank; when from her episcopal thrones and Councils she issued her decrees in all the dignity of conscious authority, and enforced them with a power which she knew could not be disputed. Twelve centuries of darkness and degradation intervene between that period and the present, and little, save the name of Christian, exists to direct the researches of the historian, or rescue the account which has been transmitted to us of numerous and flourishing churches in that now sterile region from the suspicion of fable or romance. Several parts of Africa, besides Egypt, are referred to in the holy Scriptures. Ethiopia, or Abyssinia, is frequently mentioned. Its conversion to God is predicted; and the prophecy may date its fulfilment from the baptism of the officer under Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, by Philip the Deacon. The Libyans are joined with them in a prophecy of Daniel, and some of the inhabitants of Libya are mentioned as being present at the effusion of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. Here, also, Cyrene is introduced, as neighbouring on Libya. Simon, who was compelled to bear our Lord's cross, was a native of this part of Africa. Natives of Cyrene are also spoken of, Acts xi. 20; xiii. 1. Alexandria gave birth to Apollos, 'an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures;' and in a ship belonging to this renowned city, Paul sailed into Italy. Africa being a province of Rome, it was natural

before that time, as Tillemont remarks. (Memoires Eccles., tom. iii., p. 112.) Pagi thinks Victor did not die by the sword, because in Martyrologies he is called only a confessor, though his dignity and zeal exposed him to continual persecutions, for which alone he might deserve the title of martyr." (Lives of Saints, July 28th.) "Victor is named by Jerome the first among ecclesiastical authors who wrote in Latin. He published on the controversy about the celebration of Easter, and some other books on religious subjects, which were still extant in Jerome's time. As for the two Decretals that are ascribed to him, and the two letters to Desiderius and Paracoda, both Bishops of Vienne, they are generally and with reason rejected. The Church of Rome has placed Victor among her saints; and truly his attempt, however unsuccessful, to promote the power and extend the jurisdiction of that see, deserved no less a reward." (Bower's History of the Popes, vol. i., p. 39, 4to.)

that the Christian religion should be carried thither; and accordingly we find that it abounded with Christians, though of the manner in which the Gospel was introduced we have no certain account. Eusebius and Jerome allege that Mark the Evangelist was the first founder of a congregation at Alexandria, and he is accordingly called the first Bishop * of that see. The Ethiopian eunuch baptized by Philip is said to have preached Christ to his countrymen on his return. The light of the Gospel reached the famous city of Carthage in the latter part of the second century; and not long after, Numidia embraced the religion of the cross."† Dupin, the celebrated French historian, after giving an account of the African Councils and their acts, says,—The reflections which may be made on the Synods of Africa are these: "First, that there were in Africa a great number of Bishops. Secondly, that the title of Metropolitan, in Africa, was not, as in other places, affixed to the Bishop of the civil metropolis, but to the antiquity of the bishopric. Thirdly, that the Bishop of Carthage had much authority over all in Africa; that he enjoyed great jurisdictions and prerogatives; in a word, that he was, as it were, the Exarch or Patriarch of all Africa. Fourthly, that Synods were very often held in Africa; and they were distinguished into two sorts,—one provincial, the other national or general, which were commonly held at Carthage, where the Bishops deputed from the provinces assembled, under the authority of the Bishop of that city. Fifthly, that they handled matters of discipline, and made such canons as they saw the juncture and state of affairs required. Sixthly, that their discipline, with regard to Clergymen, was very regular and exact. Seventhly, that they endeavoured to maintain the ecclesiastical authority by the assistance of the imperial laws. Lastly, that they made canons very useful to all Christians."

Severus, during his campaign in the East, would not fail to see many temples deserted, and to witness a religion different from his own, advancing with rapid strides. Individuals in his train would not hesitate to prejudice his mind upon this point, and represent the rising sect as detrimental to the national peace and welfare. In addition to this, Severus, while in the East, had surveyed with wondering interest, the monuments of Egyptian glory, and also of Egyptian superstition. His dark and relentless mind had been especially impressed with the religion of Serapis. In either character, as the great Pantheistic deity which absorbed the attributes and functions of all the more ancient gods of Egypt; or, in his more limited character, as the Pluto of their mythology, the lord of the realm of departed spirits; Serapis was likely to captivate the imagination of the Emperor, and to suit those gloomier moods in which it delighted, in brooding over the secrets of futurity; and having real-

* Eusebius names the Bishops in regular succession from Mark; as, Annianus, who succeeded the Apostle and Evangelist in the eighth year of the reign of Nero; Avilius, who succeeded Annianus in the fourth year of Domitian; after him Cerdon, in the first year of Trajan; then Primus, in the twelfth of Trajan; Marcus, Celadin, Agrippinus, Julian, Clement, &c.

† Missions in Western Africa, &c. By the Rev. Samuel Abraham Walker, M.A. 8vo. pp. 82, *et seq.* Dublin, 1845.

ized the proud prognostics of greatness which his youth had watched with hope, now began to dwell on the darker omens of decline and dissolution.* Be that as it may, Severus, although formerly favourable to the Christians, many of whom he had actually saved from persecution, issued an edict against them, which, in its operation, was more severe than that of any former Emperor: its aim was to destroy Christianity root and branch, and to prevent the seed being sown; he also sent an order to Rome, by which the persons who attended illegal assemblies in that city were to be brought before the Prefect. The spirit of persecution was now revived in most parts of the world, and in some places it raged fiercely; so that the controversy with the church was carried on by means of torture and fire. Paganism did really triumph.

"During this persecution, Tertullian," says the historian Milman, "stood forth as the apologist of Christianity; and the tone of his Apology is characteristic not only of the individual, but of his native country, while it is no less illustrative of the altered position of Christianity. The address of Tertullian to Scapula, the Prefect of Africa, is no longer in the tone of tranquil expostulation against the barbarity of persecuting blameless and unoffending men, still less that of humble supplication. Every sentence breathes scorn, defiance, menace. It heaps contempt upon the gods of Paganism, it avows the determination of the Christians to expel the demons from the respect and adoration of mankind. It condescends not to exculpate the Christians from being the cause of the calamities which had recently laid waste the province; the torrent-rains which had swept away the harvests; the fires which had heaped with ruin the streets of Carthage; the sun which had been preternaturally eclipsed, when at its meridian, during an assembly of the province at Utica. All these portentous signs are unequivocally ascribed to the vengeance of the Christians' God visiting the guilt of obstinate idolatry. The persecutors of the Christians are warned by the awful examples of Roman dignitaries who had been stricken blind, and eaten with worms, as the chastisement of Heaven for their injustice and cruelty to the worshippers of Christ. Scapula himself is sternly admonished to take warning by their fate; while the orator, by no means deficient in dexterous address, at the same time reminds him of the humane policy of others: 'Your cruelty will be our glory. Thousands of both sexes, and of every rank, will eagerly crowd to martyrdom, exhaust your fires, and weary your swords. Carthage must be decimated; the principal persons in the city, even, perhaps, your own most intimate friends and kindred, must be sacrificed. Vainly will you war against God. Magistrates are but men, and will suffer the common lot of mortality; but Christianity will endure as long as the Roman empire, and the duration of the empire will be coeval with that of the world.'" †

We must now allude to the sufferers in this persecution, which had begun to rage fiercely. Baronius, the annalist, supposes that

* Milman's History of Christianity, vol. ii., 8vo. edit., p. 208.
† Idem., p. 215.

one cause of the Emperor travelling to Egypt was, the protection which Philip, the Governor of that country, had lately afforded the Christians.* There is much that is fabulous in the accounts which are extant of this officer. The authority for his conversion to the Gospel, and his subsequent martyrdom, is open to much suspicion; and the letter which Severus is said to have written to him, commanding him either to adhere to the old religion, or give up his situation, can hardly be admitted as an authentic document. If the story be founded upon facts, Philip may have been superseded as Governor of Egypt by Lætus, who was certainly in office when the persecution broke out, and who showed himself very willing to second the cruelty of his master. Demetrius was Bishop of Alexandria, and continued to hold that office for several years more. We are not told that he was a personal sufferer in the present season of trial; but he had the pain of seeing great numbers of his flock cut off by martyrdom.† From various parts of Egypt the Christians were brought to Alexandria to suffer; among whom was Leonidas.

Leonidas was the father of Origen, a Christian of eminent piety, and sedulously devoted to the religious instruction of his children: he was thrown into prison, and shortly beheaded. As the name of Origen stands so pre-eminent among Christian writers, we may briefly notice his early history. He was seventeen years old when his father received the martyr's crown, having been born in the year 184 or 185. The astonishing powers of his mind developed themselves at a youthful age; and Leonidas is said to have secretly blessed God for giving him such a child, even while he pretended to chide him for going beyond his years in the study of the Scriptures. Origen was extremely studious, and of a melancholy turn of mind; so that he prematurely turned his attention to theology, into the depths of which he penetrated with untiring industry. After having been some years a pupil of Clement of Alexandria, he placed himself under Ammonius Saccas,‡ a Teacher of eminence in the Platonic school,

* "The persons who managed this persecution under the Emperor were chiefly Hilarion, Vigellius, Claudius, Herminian, (Governor of Cappadocia,) Capella, Vespronius, also Demetrius mentioned by Cyprian, and Aquila, Judge of Alexandria, of whom Eusebius maketh relation." To this list must also be added Scapula, Proconsul of Africa. "The places where the force of this persecution most raged, were Africa, Alexandria, Cappadocia, and Carthage. The number of them that suffered in this persecution, by the report of ecclesiastical history, was innumerable." (Foxe.)

† Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxii.

‡ Ammonius was surnamed Saccas from the circumstance of his being obliged, in the early period of his life, to gain his livelihood at Alexandria by carrying sacks, and acting as a porter in the market. He lived at Alexandria about the commencement of the second, and the beginning of the third, century of our era, and died there, A.D. 421. He was the son of Christian parents, but afterwards embraced the heathen religion, to which he remained faithful to the end of life. His low occupations, during the early part of his career, did not prevent his aspiring to higher things, and he seems to have studied philosophy with real enthusiasm. The discord, and the sectarian spirit of the philosophers of his time, who not only indulged in the most vehement polemics against one another, but also endeavoured to lower in public estimation the great founders of the philosophical schools, to which they were opposed, deterred many from joining their several sects. The new system which he built up, and which was an attempt to unite within itself all the great elements of heathen philosophy, was intended to serve as a bulwark against the growing strength of Christianity; and this system, which maintained itself for several centuries, was indeed the last great phenomenon of heathen

under whom he became master of the philosophy of the Platonics, Pythagoreans, and Stoics; and acquired the allegorical and mystical style of interpretation which he afterwards employed in his commentaries on the Scriptures. In the attack which was now making upon the peace and prosperity of the church, Severus caused to be brought to Alexandria, from all parts of Egypt, the most celebrated of the Christian Divines, that he might satiate his fiendish hatred of the holy Jesus by feasting his eyes on the dying agonies of his most devoted saints. The perverted zeal of young Origen now displayed itself in a manner common among Christians in those times. He panted for the honour of martyrdom, purposely exposing himself to danger, and determined to join his father in prison, that he might die with him; but his mother concealed his clothes, and thus confined him to the house. He now wrote a letter to his father, one line of which only has come down to us, "Take heed, father, that your care for us do not make you change your resolution." On the death of the father the paternal property was all confiscated, and the family was reduced to the greatest distress; but God raised up a friend for Origen in the person of a rich lady, who gave him an asylum in her house, where he with diligence continued to prosecute his studies. He was scarcely eighteen when he opened a school to support himself and his mother; and his success was most encouraging. Still the persecution raged, and young Origen was unceasing in his attendance on the martyrs in prison, and at the place of execution;* his own escape was almost miraculous, for he had become a celebrated character, multitudes crowding to hear his expositions of the divine word;† and as Demetrius, the Bishop, had committed the school of Alexandria to him, he was placed in a position of dangerous pre-eminence. Finding the occupation of a *grammarian* injurious to his theological studies, he relinquished that employment, and sold his library containing the works of the heathen philosophers, poets, &c., for which the buyer engaged to give him four *oboli* a day; and on this he subsisted for several years, sleeping

intellect and philosophy. Ammonius Saccas did not write anything; but as a Teacher he exercised an extraordinary influence, and among numerous disciples who flocked around him, we need only mention such names as Longinus, Plotinus, Porphyry, Herennius, and Origen.

* "So zealous was he in the cause of Christ, and of Christ's martyrs, that he, nothing fearing his own peril, would assist and exhort them, going to their death, and kiss them; insomuch that he was oft in jeopardy to be stoned by the multitude; and sometimes by the provision of Christian men he had his house guarded with soldiers, for the safety of those who daily resorted to hear his readings. And many times he was compelled to shift places and houses, for such as laid wait for him in all places; but great was the providence of God to preserve him in the midst of all this tempest of Severus." (Foxe; see also Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. vi. cap. 3.)

† "With all Origen's piety and zeal, nothing could be worse than his mode of interpreting Scripture. Forsaking the plain and obvious sense, he discovered a mystic meaning under the most literal statement of facts, and supposed that the sacred history was only a parabolic mode of conveying to the initiated divine truths too deep for common understandings. After this manner the whole word of God was turned into fable, and, as a necessary consequence, rendered perfectly useless as a revelation from above; speaking, as it was thus made to do, a language foreign to the sense meant to be conveyed." (Walker's Missions in Western Africa.) For an illustration of Origen's mode of interpretation we refer to the Succession of Sacred Literature, by Dr. Adam Clarke, vol. i., p. 167, *et seq.*

on the floor, walking barefooted, and going almost naked. Origen's mind was a chaos of extravagant notions. His conduct was an equally outrageous comment on the loveliness, peace, and sociability of the Gospel scheme. Self-infliction of the severest kind was practised by him, as agreeable to the tenderest of Fathers; and the fruits of the Spirit, instead of being love, joy, peace, appeared to him to be exhibited in every endeavour to banish them from his own breast, and extirpate each tendril on which they might have grown. With such teaching and procedure as this, the repose and even existence of the African church were jeoparded; heresies multiplied, appeals to Scripture became every day more uncertain and unsatisfactory; and, as the professedly Christian work soon ceased to be of God, it quickly came to nothing. "How much better," says the historian Milner, "had it been for him to have continued a scholar for some time, before his pride was feasted by being appointed a teacher! But the lively flow of genius seems to have been mistaken for great growth in Christian knowledge and piety." That Origen was a very voluminous writer, not only his *Hexapla* and *Tetrapla* prove, but also the twenty-five volumes which, Eusebius says,* he wrote upon the Gospel of Matthew. But very small tracts were called volumes formerly. This Christian and scholar, after having suffered much for the testimony of Christ, died a natural death at Tyre, A.D. 254, in the sixty-ninth year of his age.†

But to return. In the year 203 we find a new Governor of Egypt in the room of Lætus: his name was Aquila, who continued the persecution as before; and as Severus was now returned to Rome, the enemies of Christianity, doubtless, pursued their unhallowed enterprise, and prosecuted their sanguinary crusade, against the faithful with still greater vigour and zeal. Origen was attracting a numerous audience; among whom we find the name of Heraclas, who succeeded Demetrius in his see, and whose brother, Plutarchus, suffered martyrdom. Both these eminent men were converted to the faith through the instrumentality of Origen; the latter of whom prepared himself for suffering by a holy and devoted life, and being a person of distinction was soon apprehended. He was visited and encouraged in the prison by his teacher, who also accompanied him to the place of execution, where he himself narrowly escaped death from the resentment of the pagan friends of Plutarch, who charged him with being the cause of his abandonment of Heathenism. Serenus, a brother, was another pupil of Origen, who was also burnt at the stake; Heraclides, Heron, and another of the name of Serenus, suffered at this period in rapid succession by means of decapitation. Herais, also, a damsel, and a catechumen in the same school, was committed to the flames, and, according to the significant expression of

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vi., cap. 36.

† For a more full account of this extraordinary man, the reader is referred to Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vi., cap. 2, *et seq.*; Clarke's Succession of sacred Literature, vol. i., p. 160, *et seq.*; Burton's Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, lect. xxi.; Milner's History of the Church of Christ, vol. i., p. 321, *et seq.* 8vo. edit. York, 1794; Walker's Missions in Western Africa, p. 95, *et seq.*; Cave's Lives of the Fathers, vol. i., p. 321—361. 8vo. edit.

Origen, "was baptized with fire." He had several ladies of distinction among his disciples; and many "of the learned, and even philosophers of no mean account, were prevailed upon to adopt his doctrine."*

The martyrdom of Potamiæna is probably ranked among the most interesting which occurred during the reign of Severus. She was by condition a slave, but had the privilege to be educated in the faith by a pious mother, whose name was Marcella. Being young, and possessing considerable personal attractions, her heathen master contemplated her dishonour; but finding her resolution and virtue invincible, and all his artifices, threats, and promises in vain, he delivered her to the Prefect Aquila, intreating him not to hurt her, if she could be induced to comply with his desire; and on that condition, the proprietor of the slave promised the Prefect a considerable sum of money. Many things are related of her fortitude in suffering for the faith of Christ. It is said that Aquila, after having applied the severest tortures to her on every part of her body, and not being able to effect his purpose, at last threatened that he would give her person to be abused by gladiators, and actually caused a caldron of boiling pitch to be prepared, and then said to her, "Obey your master, or in this way you shall suffer." She replied, "I conjure you by the life of the Emperor, which you profess to respect, that you do not suffer me to be dishonoured: command me, rather, to be let down by degrees into the caldron with my clothes on, that you may see the patience with which Jesus Christ, of whom you are ignorant, endues those who trust in him." The Prefect granted this request, and committed her to Basilides, a Captain of the army, to see the execution done. But when the multitude attempted to assault and insult her with abusive language, he endeavoured to suppress them, and manifested great compassion and kindness towards her. Potamiæna, to requite his favours, encouraged him, saying, "that she would pray the Lord to have mercy upon him." When she had spoken this, she went to her martyrdom, and nobly sustained the issue. The executioners placed her feet in the boiling pitch, and then gradually lowered her in it, even to the very top of her head, and thus she expired.† Her mother, Marcella, was burnt at the same time. "Not long after," says Eusebius, "Basilides, being urged to swear on a certain occasion by his fellow-soldiers, declared that it was not lawful for him to swear at all, for he was a Christian, and this he publicly professed. At first, indeed, they thought that he was only jesting; but as he constantly persevered in the assertion, he was conducted to the Judge; before whom, confessing his determination, he was committed to prison. When some of the brethren came to see him, and inquired the cause of this sudden and singular resolve, he is said to have declared, that Potamiæna, indeed, for the three days after her martyrdom, had appeared to him, placed a crown upon his head, and said she had entreated the Lord for him, and had obtained her request; adding, moreover, that it

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vi. cap. 3.

† Idem, cap. 5; Foxe's Acts and Monuments, vol. i., p. 156. Seeley's edit.

should not be long before he should be received up. On this the brethren gave him the seal * in the Lord; and after bearing a distinguished testimony to the truth, he was beheaded.†

The reader will probably be led to imagine this account not only extraordinary, but also improbable; "yet," remarks a pious historian, "it would be rash to reject it altogether. Eusebius lived not long after the time of Origen; he had made accurate inquiries after him and his followers in Alexandria, and observes, that the fame of Potamiæna was in his time very great in that province. Her martyrdom and that of the soldier seem sufficiently authentic. Her promise to pray for him after her departure, only shows the gradual prevalence of fanatical philosophy, will-worship, and the like; and if the reader be not prepared by an adequate degree of candour to admit the truth of Christian narratives, and the reality of Christian grace, though pitiably stained, in many instances, with such superstition, he will find little satisfaction in the evidences of Christian piety for many ages. But we are slaves to habit: we make in our times great allowance for the love of the world in Christians, and are not so easily disposed to make allowances for superstition. Yet many wrong sentiments and views may be found where the heart is devoted in faith and love to God and his Christ. The only difficulty remaining is, how we can apprehend that God should sanctify superstition by sending Potamiæna to appear to Basilides? I apprehend that God being at work with his soul, the idea of the woman would naturally make a strong impression upon his mind, and he might dream what he mentioned. On the whole, the story seems tinged with the superstition of the times, and yet it is too remarkable in Christian annals to deserve to be forgotten."‡

In other parts of the Roman empire, the effects of the persecution of Severus were equally disastrous. If the ancient Martyrologies had come down to us uncorrupted, they would have afforded us valuable materials in illustrating the genius of real Christianity, and its influence on its primitive professors; but we regret that the frauds, interpolations, and impositions with which they abound, are innumerable; and the Papal and monastic institutions in after-ages induced many for the sake of filthy lucre, or of deceiving the multitude by exhibiting the power of church influence, actually to vitiate the accounts which pious and zealous men had recorded of the sufferings of the witnesses for the truth, and endeavoured even to destroy the integrity of the writings of the Fathers in general. The difficulty of procuring materials for a well-connected history of the church is thereby considerably increased: we are led to imagine, that this is not the case in respect of the martyrs of Scyllita, a town in the province of Carthage, under Vigellius Saturninus § the Proconsul. Dr. Bur-

* By the term "seal," Eusebius doubtless means baptism, which in the primitive church was thus figuratively spoken of.

† Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vi., cap. 5.

‡ Milner's History of the Church of Christ, vol. i., p. 326.

§ Saturninus was probably in command at the time that Severus visited Africa in 202. The Emperor was himself of African extraction; and we know that, towards the end of his reign, he conferred many favours upon that country. Indulgences shown to

ton says, the narrative "is among the few authentic records which have come down to us;" and Milner does not scruple to observe, that it is "simple, credible throughout, and worthy of the purest ages of the Gospel."

Twelve persons were brought before Saturninus, the Proconsul of Carthage, the chief of whom were Speratus, Narzal, and Cittin; and three women, Donata, Secunda, and Vestina. When they came into the presence of the Judge, he said to them all, "You may expect the Emperor's, our master's, pardon, if you will only return in good earnest to our gods." Speratus answered, "We have done no evil to any man; we have spoken no evil against any man; nay, for all the wrongs which you have inflicted on us, we have only thanked you, in which we obey our Emperor, who prescribed this rule of behaviour." Saturninus answered, "We have also a religion that is simple: we swear by the genius of the Emperors, and we offer up vows for their health, which you ought also to do." Speratus said, "If you will hear me peaceably, I will declare unto you the mystery of Christian simplicity." The Proconsul replied, "Shall I hear you speak ill of our ceremonies? rather swear all of you by the genius of the Emperor our master, that you may enjoy the pleasure of life." Speratus again replied, "I know not the genius of the Emperor. I serve God who is in heaven, whom no man hath seen nor can see. I have never been guilty of any crime punishable by the public laws; if I buy anything, I pay the duties to the collectors; I acknowledge my God and Saviour to be the Emperor of all nations; I have made no complaints against any person, and therefore they ought to make none against me." The Proconsul, turning to the rest, said, "Do not you imitate the folly of this wicked wretch; but rather fear our Prince, and obey his commands." Cittin replied, "We only fear the Lord our God, who is in heaven." The Proconsul, upon this, ordered the Christians to be reconducted to prison till the next day, and placed in fetters.

On the following day, the Proconsul, being seated on his tribunal, caused the prisoners to be brought before him; and then said to the women, "Honour our Prince, and do sacrifice to the gods." Donata replied, "We honour Cæsar as Cæsar; but to God we offer prayer and worship." Vestina answered, "I also am a Christian." Secunda said, "I also believe in my God, and will continue steadfast to him; and as for your gods, we will not serve nor adore them." Saturninus then ordered them to be separated; and, having summoned the rest into his presence, he said to Speratus, "Perseverest thou in being a Christian?" Speratus replied, "Yes; I do persevere: let all give ear, I am a Christian;" which being heard by the rest, they all said, "We also are Christians." The Proconsul then said, "You

the Heathen were often the cause of increased suffering to the Christians; and the Governors of the province, at this period, appear to have rivalled each other in continuing the persecution. The successor of Saturninus was Minucius Fermianus, who was himself succeeded by Hilarianus. With regard to Saturninus, it was perhaps not unnatural that a loss of sight, which came upon him shortly after the martyrs of Scyllita suffered, should be considered as a visitation from Heaven. (Burton; see also Tertul., Ad Scap., cap. 3.)

will neither consider nor receive mercy." They answered, "Do what you please, we shall die joyfully for the sake of Jesus Christ." The Judge asked, "What books are those which you read and revere?" Speratus in answer said, "The four Gospels of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Epistles of the Apostle St. Paul, and all the Scripture that is inspired of God." Saturninus then said, "I will give you three days to come to yourselves." Upon which Speratus answered, "I am a Christian, and such are all those who are with me; and we will never quit the faith of our Lord Jesus. Do, therefore, what you think fit." Seeing their resolution, the Proconsul pronounced sentence against them in the following terms:—"Speratus, and others, having acknowledged themselves to be Christians, and having refused to pay due honour to the Emperor, I command their heads to be cut off." This judgment having been publicly read, Speratus and the rest exclaimed, "We give thanks to God, who honoureth us this day with being received as martyrs to heaven, for confessing his name." They were carried to the place of punishment, where they all fell on their knees together, and having again given thanks to Jesus Christ, they were beheaded.*

About this period, A. D. 204, four young professors were arrested at Carthage, who had recently entered the congregation of the faithful as catechumens. Their names were Revocatus and Felicitas, who were slaves belonging to the same master, and Saturninus and Secundulus, with a young and noble lady, Vivia Perpetua, whose virtues rendered her an object of the tenderest love to her parents and to her husband. At the time of her apprehension she was twenty-two years of age, and had an infant at the breast, and expected shortly to give birth to another. Therefore beside the common struggles of flesh and blood against the hand of death, she had other feelings with which to contend, even those pure feelings of human nature which Christianity recognises in all their strength, and which genuine piety even heightens, while at the same time it requires the sacrifice of them to the one to whom all must yield. The mother of Perpetua was a Christian, but her aged father was a Heathen. Besides the bitterness of losing a beloved daughter, he feared the ignominy which her execution as a Christian would bring upon him. This extraordinary woman wrote an account of the affliction she experienced between being taken from her own home and the execution; and there are few ancient documents of a more interesting character than that which purports to be, and there is good reason to believe is, a transcript of her narrative or confession. According to this account we learn that she and her companions were kept under guard some days before they were cast into prison; and that in this interval she was visited by her father, who, loving her with an affection which knew no bounds, earnestly besought her to recant, and so restore herself to her afflicted family; but, pointing to a vase which stood on the floor, she said, "Can you give any other name than vase to that vessel?" and on his answering in the negative, "Neither," she continued, "can I call myself by any other name than that of Chris-

* Fleury's Histoire Ecclesiastique, tom i., lib. v. sect. 3.

tian." On this the afflicted parent could no longer repress his passion, but flinging himself upon her, he would, in his frenzy, have done her some serious injury; but her strength and resolution supported her, and she remained unharmed either in mind or person.

During the short period that these catechumens were under guard, but not confined to the prison, they found means to be baptized, and the prayers of Perpetua were directed particularly for patience under bodily pains. Many days elapsed before she again saw her father: in the mean time they were all thrown into the dungeon. In recording this event, Perpetua, with the natural timidity of her sex, says, "I was terrified at it; for I had never been in such darkness. O fearful day! The crowd of prisoners made us suffer the most oppressive heat; and the rude treatment we endured from the soldiers, with the anxiety I felt about my child, increased my uneasiness." The Deacons who brought the communion * to them in the dungeon, purchased for the Christian prisoners a better residence in the prison, where they were separated from other criminals. "We went forth," says Vivia, "and in doing so, every one thought of his own immediate wants. I gave suck to my babe who was dying with hunger, and recommended him to the care of my mother. I endeavoured to strengthen my brother; but was penetrated with the deepest sorrow at seeing what they suffered on my account. Many days were passed in anxiety and restlessness; but being allowed to keep my babe with me, I found great consolation therefrom, and the prison became a palace to me, so much so, that I preferred it to any other place whatsoever."

Perpetua proceeds to say, that, while in this frame of mind, her brother desired her to pray to God that he would let her know by some vision, whether the present affliction were to end in martyrdom; to which she answered, that the next day he should hear something respecting it. In the present age, when the mind is so rarely subject to extraordinary excitements, it is difficult to avoid confounding the belief and sentiments, which, though enthusiastic, passionate, and perhaps highly erroneous, are still natural, and worthy of respect, because attributable to a state of feeling produced by real and sufficient causes, with those which have no assignable origin, but the suggestions of a weak intellect, and disordered fancy. A very wide difference, however, exists between the two cases; and while we simply regard with pity the victims of a wild, exciting error in modern times, the visions and revelations of the early Christian sufferers inspire the reflecting mind with a feeling of solemnity not unmingled with either respect or awe, for they serve to convince us of the vio-

* "Diacones qui nobis ministrabant." (Acta Martyr. Sincera, p. 4.) Neander imagines that the Deacons brought the consecrated elements to the imprisoned Christians, a practice well-known not to be unfrequent. Hence the testimony of Mosheim: "When the Christians celebrated the Lord's supper, which they were accustomed to do chiefly on Sundays, they consecrated a part of the bread and wine of the oblations by certain prayers which the Bishop of the congregation uttered. The wine was mixed with water; the bread was divided into small pieces. Portions of the consecrated bread and wine were commonly sent to the absent, and the sick, in testimony of fraternal affection towards them." (Mosheim's Eccles. Hist., vol. i., cent. ii., part ii., chap. iv., sect. 12. 8vo. Soames's edit.)

lent conflict which took place in their hearts before they could subdue the backwardness of nature to undergo the trial to which faith had put it,—a conflict which it hence seems was in many instances too strong for the mind, though not for the spirits.*

It is evident, however, that neither credulity nor incredulity had any share in the record which Perpetua has left of the circumstance. They were the dreams of a mind agitated by fears which faith might overcome, but the hideous aspect of which it could not change; and when she says, in speaking of her brother, "I told him boldly that the next day he should hear news; and I prayed to God, and behold what was shown me;" we have no reason to doubt that she spoke from the perfect conviction of her heart. Her dream or vision, as she terms it, is described as consisting of a very lofty ladder of gold, which reached from earth to heaven; but so narrow that not more than one person could ascend it at the same time. To the two sides of this ladder were attached every species of chains, swords, crosses, and other instruments of torture, and they were placed in such a manner that they could not fail of wounding any one who should mount the ladder carelessly, or without looking up; and below it appeared a huge dragon, which glared ferociously on all who approached. The first person she saw was Satur, who, moved by the example of the catechumens, had voluntarily given himself up to the Magistrates. When he arrived at the top of the ladder, he turned towards her, and said, "Perpetua! I await you; but beware that the dragon do not tear you." To which exhortation she replied, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, he shall do me no harm." The dragon, on hearing these words, lifted up his head in a manner so gentle, that he seemed to fear her, and she did not hesitate to step from the first stave of the ladder upon the huge monster. She then ascended, and her eyes were quickly regaled with the sight of a wide extended garden, in the middle of which sat a man of lofty stature, in the garb of a shepherd, and with white locks. He was milking his ewes, and was surrounded by a number of other persons, all of whom were clad in white. As Perpetua approached him, he raised his head, and, observing her, said, "You are welcome, my daughter;" and then gave her of the milk he had drawn from the flock. She received it with joy, and drank it; on which all those who surrounded the Pastor exclaimed, "Amen!" with the sound of which still ringing in her ears, she awoke. No doubt was entertained by Perpetua or her brother, after the former had related this dream, that her martyrdom was at hand.

The report that they were about to be tried having reached the ears of the aged father of Perpetua, he hastened to her, and said, "Have pity, my daughter, on my grey hairs; have pity on thy father, if I was ever worthy of that name; if I myself have brought you up to this age, if I have preferred you to all your brethren, make me not a reproach to mankind, respect your father and your aunt," (these were joined in the interests of Paganism, while the mother was a Christian, otherwise his silence concerning her seems

* Stebbing's History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 98.

scarce to be accounted for,) "have compassion on your son, who cannot survive you. Lay aside thy haughty spirit, lest thou exterminate our race! not one of us can again speak with the freedom of a man, if thou come to such an end." The old gentleman, with much tenderness, kissed her hands, threw himself at her feet, weeping, and calling her no longer his daughter, but his mistress. He was the only person of the family who did not rejoice at her martyrdom. "The grey hairs of my father," says Perpetua, "gave me pain. I lamented that he alone, of all my family, would not rejoice in my sufferings." She said to him, "When I stand before the tribunal, God's will must come to pass! for remember, we stand not in our own power, but in that of God." Perpetua, though inwardly torn with filial affection, could offer her father no other comfort than to desire him to acquiesce in the divine disposal.

The following day, as was anticipated, the prisoners were conducted into court. There the unhappy father appeared, with his young grandson, to try his last efforts with his daughter. The rest of the company having confessed their faith in Christ, it came to Perpetua's turn to be examined, when her father suddenly stood before her, and conjured her to have pity upon her child. The Governor then joined in the entreaty; and, addressing Perpetua, said, "Take pity on thy father's grey hairs; take pity on thy child. Offer sacrifice for the prosperity of the Emperor." "That," said the martyr, "I cannot do." "Art thou a Christian?" said Hilarianus. "I am," replied the dauntless woman; but as she uttered the last words, her father endeavoured to pull her by force from the tribunal; on seeing which, the Judge, whose forbearance was exhausted, ordered him to be driven off, and the agonized old man received a violent blow from the staff of one of the officers. "I felt that blow," said Perpetua, "as if it had fallen on myself, so deeply was I affected at beholding my father so treated in his old age." Her fate, with that of her companions, was now decided. They were all condemned, on the ensuing festival of Geta's accession, to be thrown to the wild beasts, and thus afford a cruel sport to the soldiery and people. They returned to their prison rejoicing: the tenderness of a mother's feeling did not overwhelm Perpetua. She sent to her father for her child, that she might give it suck; but the father would not part with it: this circumstance she notes in her narrative as a particular mercy of God, that neither she nor the infant suffered from this sudden separation. Her father, however, again visited her, and repeated his former entreaties and arguments, but with as little success; and having given the relation of a third vision, with which she supposed she was divinely favoured, she concludes her narrative, which she continued to the last evening of her life: "This is what I have written to the eve of the spectacle. Some one else will describe, if he think proper, what happened there."

Secundulus died in prison; and Perpetua was not the only female who afforded an example of extraordinary firmness in this persecution. One of the other prisoners, the slave Felicitas, was within a few weeks of becoming a mother; and as her situation would have kept her from

being put to death so soon as her companions, she was afflicted lest her execution would be deferred, and that she would have to suffer among common criminals. Three days before the spectacles, her companions joined in prayer for her, that the Almighty would vouchsafe to her a speedy delivery. Her desire was granted. The pains which she endured were so great, as to induce one of the guards to observe, who probably expected to find in her a stoical insensibility, "You complain now, what will you do when exposed to the wild beasts?" Felicitas answered with a sagacity which was truly Christian, "It is I that suffer now; but then there will be another with me, that will suffer for me, because I shall suffer for his sake." Her new-born daughter was placed in the hands of a Christian woman, who nursed it as her own.

On the evening preceding the festival, the prisoners were allowed a kind of feast, as was usual, it seems, on such occasions; but even this was not granted till Perpetua demanded it, in order that other Christians of the place might have an opportunity of visiting them. The tribune, believing a report of some that the prisoners would feed themselves by magical practices, treated them roughly. "Why don't you," said Perpetua, "give us some relief? Will it not be for your honour that we should appear well fed at your spectacles?" This address of hers had the desired effect, and procured a very agreeable alteration in their treatment.* But at their last meal, the martyrs did their utmost to convert it into an *αγαπη*, or "lovefeast," as the eucharistical banquets of the Christians were sometimes called, which they endeavoured to enjoy with as much tranquillity as the admission of the populace to see them would allow. Their brethren and others were allowed to visit them; and the keeper of the prison is said, at this time, to have been converted to the faith. Occasionally they addressed the Pagans, warning them "to flee from the wrath to come;" and Satur, seeing them anxious to view the persons of himself and his fellow-captives, said, "Observe our countenances well, that you may be able to recognise them at the day of judgment." This holy tranquillity and serenity did not forsake them.

It was usual in those days, in compliance with some of the customs which had been retained from the times in which human sacrifices were offered to Baal, to clothe those condemned to die by wild beasts in priestly garments: they wished to dress the Christian men as Priests of Saturn, and the women as Priestesses of Ceres. Their free and Christian spirits, however, revolted against this. "We have come here voluntarily," said they, "that our freedom might not be taken away from us. We have given up our lives, that we might not be compelled to these practices." The Heathens themselves recognised the justice of their demand, and conceded the point. The Spirit of the Lord did not forsake his servants in the hour of trial.

* From the testimony of Perpetua, we learn that their imprisonment was very severe. She speaks of being in the stocks. They were called *nervus*; this was a wooden machine with many holes in which the prisoner's feet were fastened, and stretched to great distances, as to the fourth or fifth holes, for the increase of torment. Perpetua remarks, they were chained, and also set in the engine during their stay in the camp-prison, which seems to have been several days, in expectation of the public shows.

Joy, rather than fear, was manifested in their countenance.* Perpetua, upheld by her Lord and Saviour, left the prison with a composed countenance and an easy pace, holding down her eyes, lest the spectators might draw wrong conclusions from their apparent vivacity. Revocatus, Saturninus, and Satur, endeavoured to affect the people with the fear of "the wrath to come." Being brought into the presence of Hilarian, the Proconsul, they said, "Thou judgest us, and God shall judge thee." The mob were enraged, and insisted on their being scourged before they were exposed to the beasts. This was done, and the devoted company rejoiced in being thus far conformed to their Saviour's sufferings. The men were exposed to bears and a leopard. Perpetua and Felicitas, having been enclosed in a net, were thrown to a wild cow. Perpetua was first attacked, and was flung, lacerated, to the ground: she then placed herself in a sitting position, gathered her dishevelled hair in her hands, and put it in order, to prevent even the appearance of being in a state of confusion. On seeing her unfortunate companion struggling, wounded on the earth, she stretched out her hands towards her, lifted her up, and then walked tremblingly to one of the gates, where were assembled several of the Christians. At hearing the voice of her friends, Perpetua, it is said, seemed to wake out of a deep sleep, and observed, "I wonder when they will expose us to the cow!" she had been, apparently, unconscious of what had passed, and it was only by showing her the wounds she had received, that they could persuade her she had been injured. With the exception of Satur, who died by the teeth of the leopard, none of the martyrs expired under the attacks of the wild animals to which they were exposed. It was then that the populace insisted on having the martyrs brought into the midst of the amphitheatre, that they might not lose the last scene of this awful tragedy. Some of the company rose up, and went forward of their own accord, after having given to each other the kiss of charity; and others received the last blow from the hands of the gladiators without even stirring, and in silence. Perpetua again distinguished herself by her extraordinary firmness. The man into whose hands she fell, was an unskilful gladiator, who wounded her unnecessarily, by missing his aim; and finding him too much agitated to perform his office aright, she took his trembling hand, and guiding it to her throat, instantly fell beneath his dagger.†

* "The keeper of the prison, profoundly impressed by their conduct, and beginning to discern 'the power of God within them,' admitted many of the brethren to visit them for mutual consolation. And as the day of the games approached, my father (Perpetua records) entered, worn out with affliction, and began to pluck his beard, and to throw himself down with his face upon the ground, and to wish that he could hasten his death; and to speak words which might have moved any living creature. And I was grieved for the sorrow of his old age." (Ruinart, Acta Martyrum Sincera.)

† See Neander's History of the Christian Religion and Church, vol. i., p. 121, *et seq.*; Stebbing's History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 96, *et seq.*; Milner's History of the Church of Christ, vol. i., cent. iii., chap. 5, p. 331, ed. 8vo., York, 1794; Ruinart, Acta Martyrum Sincera, 4to., p. 94; Milman's History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 216, *et seq.*; Tillemont, Mem. Hist. Ecclesiast., tom. iii., p. 136, *et seq.* Milner very justly observes, that "Augustine in his exposition of the 47th Psalm, taking notice of the victorious strength of divine love prevailing over all natural affection, instances the case of Perpetua. He mentions the same story also, in three other places

IRENÆUS.

The remote province of Gaul did not escape the general calamity: it has been said, that Irenæus, who had held the bishopric of Lyons from about the year 178, suffered martyrdom in the reign of Severus. Stories are told of the city of Lyons being surrounded by soldiers, and all the Christians being put to death;* but it is safer to say that no particulars are known; and it is plain that great numbers of Christians survived, who continued to propagate the Gospel in that part of Gaul. If the account could be believed, which speaks of the Emperor himself being present when Irenæus was put to death, we might conclude that it did not happen till the year 208, when Severus set out with his two sons to repress an insurrection in Britain, and it is not improbable that they passed through Lyons, but the fact cannot be stated with certainty; and the evidence of Irenæus having suffered martyrdom at all, is extremely slight.† It is much to be regretted that our records of the early history of Irenæus are confessedly so scanty. The place of his birth is uncertain. His instructers in Christianity were Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, and the renowned Polycarp. The former was a man of real sanctity, but of slender abilities. He, as well as Polycarp, had been disciples of the Apostle John; and, with all the imbecility of judgment which has been ascribed to him, he might, under God, have been of essential service to Irenæus. For Polycarp he entertained an inviolable attachment: from him he received the seeds of apostolic doctrine, and also took an exact and particular notice of whatever was memorable in him, even to the most minute circumstances of his conversation, the memory of which he preserved to his dying day, By whose hands he was consecrated to the ministry of religion, we know not. It is not improbable that he accompanied Polycarp in his journey to Rome about the paschal controversy, when, by his, and the persuasion of Anicetus, he visited Gaul, which at that time was threatened to be overrun with those pernicious heresies which subsequently, not only harassed, but perilled, the very existence of the church itself; and he greatly assisted the Bishop Pothinus in the management of these affairs. Irenæus, arriving at Lyons, continued several years in the station of a Presbyter, till a heavy storm arose upon that Christian community, under

in his treatise on 'the Soul.' But it is evident that he doubts whether Perpetua herself wrote what is ascribed to her. If so, we may well doubt the truth of the visions with which this excellent narrative has been intermixed, and with which I have not thought it worth while to trouble the reader. Yet the general history has every mark of authenticity; and Augustine himself published three sermons on their anniversary. It is much to be regretted that the finest monuments of ecclesiastical antiquity have been thus tarnished by mixtures of fraud or superstition. My business is not to recite these, but that alone which carries marks of truth; and Augustine's authority has helped me to distinguish here with some degree of precision."

* See Baronii Annal. Ecclesiast., A.D. 205, sect. 28. Gregory of Tours speaks of many martyrs having suffered with Irenæus.

† Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxii. Irenæus is called a martyr by Jerome, *in Esai.* lxiv. 4, 5, tom. iii., p. 474, edit. Bened., fol. 1699, but not in any other passage: also in the work called *Questiones ad Orthodoxas.* Quæst. 115. Gregory of Tours asserts it; but he seems to place his martyrdom in 177, which is impossible. See Dodwell, Diss. ad Iren. iii. 21, p. 259; Raynaud Indic. Mart. Lugdun., p. 284; Tillemont, Memoires Eccles. Hist, tom. iii., p. 94. 4to. ed. Paris, 1695; Cave's Lives of the Fathers, vol. i., p. 258, *et seq.*, 8vo. edit., Oxford; Milner's History of the Church of Christ, vol. i., cent. iii., chap. 1, 8vo. edit.

Marcus Aurelius, which descended upon the churches in all places, but especially upon those of Lyons and Vienne, where, we are told, it was utterly impossible to describe the brutish fierceness and cruelty of their enemies, and the severity of those torments which the martyrs suffered, banished from their houses, and forbidden so much as to show their heads; reproached, beaten, hurried from place to place, plundered, stoned, imprisoned, and there treated with all the expressions of an ungovernable rage and fury, as is related by the members of the Lugdunensian church. Vast numbers were transported to heaven through infinite and inexpressible racks and torments, and among the rest Pothinus, the Bishop.*

The church at Lyons being thus deprived of its venerable leader, none was more qualified to fill the vacant seat than Irenæus, who accordingly succeeded in a troublesome and tempestuous time. But as a pilot he was skilful, courageous, and true. He defended the church against the heresies with which it was assailed with affection and fidelity, and triumphantly unmasked and refuted them. The calm and quiet days which the church had enjoyed, free from open and general persecution, were apparently at an end. The Emperor Severus commenced a bitter and sanguinary attack upon the church, which he prosecuted with great assiduity in all parts of the empire. Having formerly governed the province of Lyons, and noticed the zeal of Irenæus, and the flourishing state of the church in that place, he was the more anxious to proceed against them. The persecution, that in other parts picked out some few to make them exemplary, here served all alike, and went through with the work. Gregory of Tours and the ancient Martyrologies inform us, that Irenæus, having been prepared by previous torments, was at length put to death, and, together with him, almost all the Christians of that populous city, whose numbers could not be reckoned up, and caused the streets of the city to flow with their blood.† We may easily allow that this is a rhetorical exaggeration: at the same time, we have no reason to deny the truth of this second persecution at Lyons, and of Irenæus suffering under it. The historian of Tours may not be the most credible authority: nevertheless, we meet with no circumstances of improbability; and the silence of Eusebius by no means affords an argument to the contrary.

* Much has not been said of the state of the church in Rome, and few, if any, particulars are known concerning it, during this eventful period. Severus returned to Rome, and had a triumph for his victories in the East. At the same time he celebrated the tenth anniversary of his accession to the empire. He also married his eldest son, Caracalla, to the daughter of Plautianus; and there can be little doubt that these united festivities were the signal for many insults being offered to the Christians. Baronius supposes, that Plautianus was a prime mover in these scenes of cruelty; and if so, there was, perhaps, some respite in the following year, when he was put to death for plotting against the Emperor and his son. This, however, was the year in which the Emperor chose to have an exhibition of the secular games, but in which he had no regard to the period of one hundred years which ought to have elapsed since the last celebration. These games were attended with many ceremonies, which must have been painful to a Christian even to witness; and their refusal to take part in them was likely to expose them to many insults and cruelties. (Burton.)

† Ado in his chronicle says, that Irenæus suffered martyrdom with an exceeding great multitude.

It is generally supposed that Severus was in Lyons during this severe visitation, and on his journey to Britain, at the request of Virius Lupus, one of the Governors of that island, who, being unable to withstand the united power of the North Britons and Caledonians, was compelled to purchase with money a precarious respite from their incursions. This expedient, though it procured a temporary forbearance, invited them to a repetition of the attempt; and Lupus, wearied with continued hostilities, solicited the presence of the Emperor and the aid of a numerous army. Though Severus was advanced in years and declining in health, he cheerfully obeyed the summons. He was accompanied by his two sons, Caracalla and Geta; and after the subjugation of the insurgents, he returned to York, and devised means for the future security of the provinces. But in the midst of his endeavours he was assailed by an enemy more potent and resistless than any with whom he had hitherto contended. Severus, returning to York, grew infirm, partly with excessive labour and fatigue, and partly with grief for the dissolute conduct of his eldest son. It was here that he heard that the soldiers had declared him Emperor, a circumstance which so aroused him, that he immediately called for his litter, and commanded the new Emperor, with the tribunes and centurions to be brought before him, who were so confounded with the majesty of his appearance, as to crave pardon upon their knees: he then placed his hands on his own head, and said to the assembled company, "Know that it is the head that governs, and not the feet!" and dismissed them. Finding his affliction increase upon him, and perceiving that his speedy dissolution was inevitable, he exclaimed, "I have been all that a man can be; but this is of no use or service to me now;" and then commanding the urn to be brought which was intended to contain his ashes, he said, "This urn will shortly contain what the whole world could not before." To his sons and friends who were gathered around him, he made this remarkable declaration, "When I took the empire upon me, I found it declining and languishing; and now, being aged and decrepit, I leave it in a state firm and vigorous to my sons, if they prove good; but, if otherwise, it will become feeble, and fall." His pains became so great, that he called for poison to terminate them, but in vain; and, failing in this, he glutted himself with gross meats which the energy of his constitution refused to digest, and thus he expired.

The death of Severus put a stop to the persecution and to the unheard-of barbarities of which we have given a faint description. From the year 202 to the end of the reign of this Emperor, the Christians in every part of the world were exposed to severe trials. A writer who flourished about this period, by name Minutius Felix, has left us a dialogue entitled Octavius, which throws considerable light upon the cruel and wicked treatment which the faithful received from certain idolatrous and bigoted men, proving that the scenes which Tertullian depicted in Africa were also exhibited in Rome. The reign of Severus was highly disastrous to the cause of Christianity. If the gross and flagrant extravagancies of Commodus had directed the attention of the Heathen to look to the safety of

themselves, rather than to molesting the church of Christ, this period of repose which they enjoyed ceased when Severus ascended the throne. His military expeditions were generally successful, and the state of the nation was, almost without exception, prosperous; and on this account the Christians were unfavourably thought of, inasmuch as they were considered, if not positively hostile to the national welfare, indifferent thereto, and therefore were beheld with great jealousy and alarm at the progress which their doctrine was making upon the public mind. Fuel to the flames of persecution was undoubtedly added by the indiscreet conduct of the Christians themselves, many of whom took measures by which they endeavoured to screen themselves from persecution, and some even thought it lawful to purchase their safety for a sum of money. The fact is, that the Magistrates, instigated by the love of lucre, were accustomed to commence an attack upon the Christians, and adjudge some of the poorer sort to suffer death; by which means they were always sure to place the property of the richer classes at their command. Tertullian inveighed against these practices in terms of the keenest irony, naturally inferring, "Who can wonder that informers and accusers are on the alert, when Christians are in the habit of procuring the forbearance of these wretches by money?" But it was not only individual Christians that consulted their safety in this way: whole churches were accustomed to compound for their peace with the Presidents, and to pay a sort of annual tribute. Nay, further, it appears from the testimony of Tertullian, that some of the faithful, so called, were wont to negotiate for their security with those who had merely threatened to become their accusers, unless paid for their forbearance; at other times with the Presidents themselves, and in certain instances with the common soldiers; which last circumstance is deserving of notice, inasmuch as it plainly proves that they were directed by the Magistrates to watch the assemblies of the Christians, and not to suffer them to be held without disturbing them; and, in consequence of this, many were induced to offer bribes to the Heathen to allow them to worship the Most High in peace. The sentiments of some of the Prelates of the church were in favour of this practice, as is testified by Peter Martyr,* of Alexandria, a writer of that age, who, in the canons extracted from his discourse De Pœnitentia, not only lays it down, that those who had purchased their safety with money were not to be censured, but unequivocally commends them, and encounters Tertullian in defending them. The persecution, also, would have been less generally felt, if the Montanists had not pushed their extravagant and uncompromising doctrines to so great a length.

* In the Roman Martyrology he is reputed a saint. He was educated at Alexandria, under the instruction of Theonas, the Bishop of that see, whom he succeeded in 300. Eusebius says, "He was a most excellent teacher of the Christian doctrine, an ornament to the episcopal character, both for the holiness of his life, and his laborious application in studying and explaining the sacred Scriptures. He governed the church three years before the persecution. The rest of his time he passed in a more strict and mortified course of life, but without neglecting the common good of the churches." "Without any crime of any kind laid to his charge, beyond all expectation, on a sudden, for no other reason but the will of Maximin, he was taken into custody and beheaded." His martyrdom took place in 311.

It is in no degree improbable, that the means employed by the heathen philosophers to depreciate Christianity were in a considerable measure successful among the higher ranks of society. Hence Julia Severa, the wife of the Emperor, out of regard for the national religion, and an earnest desire to promote its prosperity, requested Philostratus, who was teaching oratory at Rome, to write the Life of the celebrated impostor, Apollonius of Tyana. This would doubtless come under the inspection of Severus, and would not tend to elevate our common Christianity in his estimation. Apollonius was considered as the hero of the old religion, and even among Christian writers there are many who have attached more importance to the life and character of this vain impostor than they deserve. Fleury has introduced a full account of his history, and seems to consider that his wonderful works were performed by the assistance of Satan. Tillemont has treated him with too much honour, when he says, that he was one of the most dangerous enemies that the Christians ever had in the beginning; and that the devil appeared to have sent him into the world about the same time with Jesus Christ, either to balance his authority in the minds of those who should take his cheats for true miracles, or to induce those who looked upon him as a deceiver, to doubt also of the miracles of Christ. Cudworth entertained a similar opinion.* In respect of the character and actions of Apollonius, admitting them to be in any degree comparable to those of our Saviour, as described in the New Testament, there is to be observed a decided difference in the evidence which we possess of their reality. The books of the sacred canon were written soon after the death of our Lord, by those who had been witnesses of what he had said and done, and when there were thousands alive who might detect any attempt to deceive; while our chief knowledge of the life of Apollonius is from memoirs written upwards of a hundred years after his death. On the other hand, conceding the history to be true, Apollonius is very far from being a perfect character; and most of the marvellous things ascribed to him may easily be accounted for, without the intervention either of miraculous or magical agency. He was a native of Tyana, in Cappadocia, of an ancient family, possessed of excellent talents, had an imposing appearance, and was not without some virtues. He attached himself to the sect of Pythagoras, practised great abstinence, observed the law of silence for five years; and by some instances of great disinterestedness, by the severe tenor of his life,

* "It is a thing highly probable, if not unquestionable, that Apollonius Tyanæus, shortly after the publication of the Gospel to the world, was a person made choice of by the policy, and assisted by the powers, of the kingdom of darkness, for the doing of some things extraordinary, merely out of design to derogate from the miracles of our Saviour Christ, and to enable Paganism the better to bear up against the assaults of Christianity. For, amongst the many writers of this philosopher's Life, some, and particularly Philostratus, seem to have had no other aim in this, their whole undertaking, than only to dress up Apollonius in such a garb and manner as might make him best seem to be a fit corrival with our Saviour Christ, both in respect of sanctity and miracles." "The use commonly made by the Pagans of the history of Apollonius was to set him up by way of opposition and rivalry to our Saviour Christ." (Cudworth, the true Intellectual System, vol. i., book i., chap. iv., sect. 15. 8vo. Tegg's edit. 1845.

(though not without the suspicion of concealed vicious indulgences,) and by his pretences to inspiration, and perhaps partly by his singularities of walking barefooted, and dressing himself in flax, he gained much notoriety, and was followed by many admirers. He was a great traveller, like those of his sect; and wherever he went he recounted the wonders he had witnessed and performed. Many miracles are ascribed to Apollonius; but they are either obviously fabulous, or they can be explained by natural causes. For example, it is related that he restored a young woman to life; but, according to the showing of his biographer himself, there were symptoms that life had not left her. The time of his death is not known, but it is supposed to have been about the year 97. Statues were erected to his honour, and divine worship in some places was paid to him.*

The sons of Severus, Caracalla and Geta, succeeded to the empire; but their accession did not produce any immediate effect upon the Christians, inasmuch as it appears, from the address of Tertullian to that most bitter enemy of the Christians, Scapula, that the commencement of the reign of Caracalla was sullied by the execution of several of the faithful in Africa. Under this Prince, however, the storm, which had been directed by his father against the church, was permitted gradually to disappear; and we do not learn that at any period, during the six years which he reigned, the Christian community had to complain of any grievous or extensive afflictions. Many causes have been assigned for this lenity. Some have attributed it to the fact that he was brought up by a Christian nurse, and that in early life he heard many things which were favourable to the new faith; and others, that it was a deep feeling of resentment which he encouraged towards certain Pagans, who inflicted summary chastisement on a Christian youth, the companion of his boyhood. The predilection of Caracalla towards the boy did not arise from any attachment to Christianity, but from an overweening fondness for the lad, with whom he was particularly intimate; neither is it very easy to conceive how an infant at the breast could have imbibed a relish for any particular religion! We do not find that Caracalla was commemorated by the early Christians as one of their patrons; and the tranquillity enjoyed by them under his reign, is rather to be attributed to their money, of which, in turbulent times, they were not accustomed to be parsimonious, than to the good-will or friendly disposition of this most inhuman Emperor. In his youth,

* Welsh's Elements of Church History, vol. i., pp. 340, 341. To give some idea of the nature of the miracles of Apollonius, and which were triumphantly by the Heathen placed against the miracles of Christ, we select the following:—One of his disciples, Menippus, is on the point of marriage at Corinth with a beautiful and wealthy maiden. Apollonius comes to the marriage-feast, and declares the bride to be an *emphusa*, "a phantom or breath,"—the rich furniture and decorations of the house melt away, the attendants vanish beneath the gaze of Apollonius; and the weeping bride, before she disappears, confesses that she is a *lamia* or *emphusa*, who thirsts after the blood of the young, and that she has enticed Menippus to devour him! At Rome Apollonius meets the funeral of a young maiden. Her betrothed and her parents follow weeping. Apollonius approaches, and speaks some words in the ear of the maiden, who returns to her father's house! A paltry imitation of the miracle of our Saviour's raising the widow of Nain's son.

it is stated that he was of such a tender and humane disposition, that when he saw any criminal thrown to the wild beasts, he would turn away his eyes, and weep: this disposition did not, however, last long, and he soon became one of the most cruel monsters in human form, that man ever saw. He murdered his brother, and partner of the throne, Geta, pleading as an excuse for this unnatural act, that his brother intended to slay him! He then proceeded against individuals of every rank, as though they had been conspiring against his person, and put them to death: he commanded his brother's servants to be slain without mercy, with many of the Senators who were the personal friends of Geta. His cruelty knew no bounds; and his licentiousness equalled his cruelty. He fell by the hand of an assassin, Martialis, whose brother Caracalla had recently put to death on suspicion merely. He died, at the age of twenty-nine, the counterpart of Caligula, after a reign of six years, on April 18th, A.D. 217, and Macrinus, who plotted his death, succeeded to the empire.

No sooner was Macrinus, with his son Diadumenus, on the throne, than a conspiracy was formed to dispossess him of his ill-gotten prize, in favour of Heliogabalus, a name which, in the eastern language, signifies "a Priest of the sun:" his personal attractions were much admired, and he was also a great favourite among the soldiery. He was proclaimed in the camp, and many rallied around his standard. The news of this revolt was a thunderbolt to Macrinus, who, with his son, was obliged to forsake the revellings in Antioch to march against this new usurper. In the confines of Syria and Phœnicia, the belligerents joined battle, in which fear and despair caused the soldiers of Heliogabalus to contend courageously: on the side of Macrinus the Prætorian soldiers only performed their duty; others were remiss and negligent; and many, abandoning him, went over to Heliogabalus, who gained the victory. Immediately he fled with some chosen friends through the provinces of Lesser Asia, and entered Bithynia, intending to proceed as quickly as possible to Rome; but, falling sick at Chalcedon, he was overtaken by his pursuers, and, with his son, was promptly put to death.

Heliogabalus succeeded Macrinus, and speedily displayed a scandalous and outrageous behaviour. He was but fourteen years of age when he was elected as Emperor; and though he was the youngest that mounted the throne, he was the most profligate Emperor that Rome ever saw, and died a miserable death after a reign of little less than four years.* We are told, that while he stopped at Antioch on his

* Heliogabalus is "rather to be called a monster than a man, so prodigious was his life in all gluttony, filthiness, and ribaldry. Such was his pomp, that in his lamps he used balm, and filled his fish-ponds with rose-water. To let pass his sumptuous vestures, which he would not wear but only of gold, and most costly silks; and his shoes glistering with precious stones finely engraved; he was never two days served with one kind of meat; he never wore one garment twice. And likewise for his fleshly wickedness; some days his company was served at meal with the brains of ostriches, and a strange fowl called phœnicoptery, another day with the tongues of popinjays, and other sweet singing-birds. Being nigh to the sea, he never used fish; in places far distant from the sea, all his house was served with the most delicate fishes. At one supper he was served with seven thousand fishes, and five thousand fowls. At his removing, in his progress often there followed him six hundred chariots laden only with common

way to Nicomedia in Bithynia, where he passed his first winter, he had an opportunity of seeing Origen. He travelled in company with his mother and her sister Mammæa; and the character of the latter forms an agreeable contrast, not only with that of her sister, but of the Emperor, and the persons in his court. Her morals were irreproachable; and even Christian writers have described her as extremely religious. It has been asserted, that she herself was a Christian, although we cannot say with any degree of certainty that she was actually converted. It is, however, to be lamented, that the character of the Emperor was so little influenced by that of his aunt. He was a monster of vice and sensuality. Before his accession to the throne, he filled the office of Priest of the sun in a temple at Emesa in Phœnicia, and these practices were not abandoned even when he was raised to imperial honours. When he arrived in Rome, one of his objects was to establish the worship of the solar deity; and to this end, he built a temple to the sun, and removed into it all the most sacred ensigns of superstition which the city possessed, and required his own Priests to study the ceremonies of every other religion, so that, if they were retained at all, they should in future be adopted in honour of the sun. All persons throughout the empire were to worship this luminary, and every species of adoration was to be merged in this.* Little, if any, molestation was offered to the Christians during this reign. The attack which the Emperor made upon the deities of Paganism, inflicted a blow upon idolatry from which it never recovered: Christianity suffered not from it, inasmuch as they had no temples, nor altars, nor any external emblem of religion; its professors could perform their devotions in secret, without any violation of the imperial command. The sincere votaries of Heathenism were differently situated; and, strange to say, that, on account

harlots, &c. He sacrificed young children, and preferred to the best advancements in the commonwealth most light personages, &c.; in a word, he was an enemy to all honesty and good order. And when he was foretold by his sorcerers and astronomers that he should die a violent death, he provided ropes of silk to hang himself, swords of gold to kill himself, and strong poison in boxes of jacinth and emerald to poison himself, if needs he must thereto be forced. Moreover, he made a high tower, having the floor of boards covered with gold-plate, bordered with precious stones, from which tower he would throw himself down, if he should be pursued of his enemies. But notwithstanding all his provision, he was slain of the soldiers, drawn through the city, and cast into the Tiber, after he had reigned two years and eight months, as witnesseth Eutropius; others say four years." (Foxe's Acts and Monuments, vol. i., pp. 163, 164. Seeley's edit. 8vo.) "His wicked mother likewise received her reward from Heaven, being slain by the soldiers at the same time." (Echard's Rom. Hist., vol. ii., p. 422. London, 1719.)

* Burton's Lectures on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxiii. "Every year of the Emperor's brief reign, the god was conveyed from his Palatine temple to a suburban edifice of still more sumptuous magnificence. The statue passed in a car drawn by six horses. The Emperor of the world, his eyes stained with paint, ran and danced before it with antic gestures of adoration. The earth was strewn with gold-dust, flowers and chaplets were scattered by the people, while the images of all the other gods, the splendid ornaments and vessels of their temples, were carried, like the spoils of subject nations, in the annual ovation of the Phœnician deity. Even human sacrifices, and, if we may credit the monstrous fact, the most beautiful sons of the most noble families, were offered on the altar of this Moloch of the East." (Milman's History of Christianity, vol. i., p. 228.) "Cædit et humanas hostias lectis ad hoc pueris nobilibus et decoris per omnem Italiam patrimis et matrimis, credo ut major esset utrique parenti dolor." (Lamprid. Heliogab.)

of the capricious conduct of Heliogabalus, they were at least placed in the same category with those who believed in the doctrines of Christ and him crucified.*

The favourable light in which the ruling powers occasionally viewed the church, did not entirely screen the Christians from insult and injury, which popular tumults were in the habit of inflicting: hence we occasionally meet with individuals who suffered martyrdom in the comparatively tranquil period which intervened from the death of Severus to the accession of Maximin. It was towards the conclusion of the reign of Heliogabalus, or at the commencement of that of Alexander Severus, that Cecilia, a young lady of high family in Rome, and educated in the principles of the Christian religion, was directed by her parents, against her own inclinations, to marry Valerian, a young person of birth and fortune equal to her own. So great was the influence which she had over him, that he consented to renounce his idolatry, and embrace Christianity, before the nuptials were celebrated. The conversion of Valerian was shortly followed by that of his brother Tiburtius, which so exasperated the civil Magistrate, that almost immediately after their baptism they were called to make a public confession of the faith which they had embraced. Both of them were accused of the crime of being Christians, and were forthwith sentenced to be beheaded. Maximus, the officer who led them to execution, was so much affected with their behaviour in their last moments, and the fortitude with which they received the stroke, that he declared himself of the same belief, and was immediately taken before the Magistrate, who allowed him the formality of a trial, and subsequently sentenced him to the same fate. Cecilia encouraged her husband and brother, exhorting them to continue steadfast in the truth, and to die as became sincere disciples; and then, after a few days, was herself apprehended; and, being required to offer sacrifice, which she refused to do, was condemned. When before the Magistrate, the officers and others, beholding her comely countenance, and being charmed with her chaste and prudent conversation,

* Mosheim observes, that, in the Life of Heliogabalus by Lampridius, there is a passage which seems to intimate, in no very obscure terms, that this otherwise most wicked of all Emperors was not ill affected towards the Christians: "Dicebat præterea, Judæorum et Samaritanorum religiones, et Christianam devotionem illuc transferendum, ut omnium culturarum secretum Heliogabali sacerdotium teneret." From this, Mosheim draws the following conclusions:—1. That Heliogabalus wished to abolish all the ancient Roman deities, and to substitute in their place the sun alone, to whom he officiated as High Priest. Nor do I much wonder at this; for there were not wanting amongst the Greeks and Romans those who conceive that the worship of all the deities referred to the sun alone. 2. That, in addition to this, he wished to have the Jewish, Christian, and Samaritan religions transferred to Rome. And, 3. That his object in seeking to accomplish this was, that the priesthood—that is, the Priests of Heliogabalus, or the sun—might get instructed in the secret ceremonies of all religions; and thence, possibly, be able to improve or embellish the sacred worship of the god of day. It was not, therefore, the wish of the Emperor to extirpate or abolish the religion of Christ, but that the persons professing it should experience a free toleration even in the city of Rome itself, and be permitted to worship God after their own manner; so that the Priests of the sun, by having a constant and unrestricted communication with them, might obtain an acquaintance with their more secret discipline. That the Emperor, thus disposed towards the Christians, should have entertained the least thought of persecuting them, seems quite beyond the reach of possibility. (Mosheim's Commentaries, vol. ii. p. 21.)

endeavoured to persuade her to a recantation, and thus save herself from the death which was prepared for her; but she replied with such strength of reason, and such hallowed and appropriate exhortation, that their hearts became softened, and they yielded to the power of that religion which they heretofore had been led to persecute and destroy. Exulting in the power of the Gospel, she desired for herself a short respite at the hands of the ruler; which being conceded, she forthwith sent for the Bishop, to establish and ground them in the faith, and by him they were ere long baptized.* No sooner was this accomplished, than Cecilia was brought before the Judge, and condemned. She was forthwith placed in a bath of scalding water, where she continued for a considerable time unhurt; after which she was ordered to lose her head.†

* Ado, the martyrologist, says, that "they were, with divers others, at the same time baptized, both men and women, to the number (as the story saith) of four hundred persons, among whom was one Gordian, a nobleman." Ado, whose name frequently occurs in this work, was born in 799 or 800, in the north of Gaul. His promising talents having attracted the notice of Sigulfus, Abbot of the monastery of Ferrieres, in his native district, he was taken into the school there when a boy; and after completing his education for the priesthood, he must have continued at Ferrieres till he was long past middle age, if the received chronology of his life be correct. For we are told that, having removed to the monastery of Trugin, on the invitation of the Abbot, Marewood, he remained there only for a short time, the hostility of some of the Monks, who appear to have been envious of his superior attainments or reputation, having induced him to take his departure to Rome, where he resided for five years, pursuing his studies, and then set out on his return to Gaul, in 857 or 858. On his way home he found at Ravenna an old Martyrology; (still preserved, and known as the "Parvum Romanum Martyrologium;") and his own more extended work of the same description, which appears to be founded upon that, is supposed to have been written at Lyons, where he stayed for some time under the protection of the Archbishop, Remi, or Remigius. Remi was Chaplain at the imperial court, and possessed great influence; and it was probably on his recommendation that Ado was appointed Archbishop of Vienne, in 860. He is the author of several works: one of the principal is his "Martyrologia." It is published in full by Jacobus Mosander, a Carthusian, in Cologne, in a seventh (supplementary) volume to the "Vitæ Sanctorum" of Surius, folio, Cologne, 1586, to which copy we have referred.

† Alban Butler gravely informs us, when rebuilding the church of Cecilia in Rome, the Bishop was in some pain how to find the body of the saint; for it was thought that the Lombards had taken it away, as they had many others, from the cemeteries of Rome, when they besieged that city under Astulphus, in 755. One Sunday, as this Pope was assisting at matins, as he was wont, at St. Peter's, he fell into a slumber, in which he was advertised by Cecilia herself, that the Lombards had in vain sought for her body, and that he should find it; and he accordingly discovered it in the cemetery called by her name, clothed in a robe of gold tissue, with linen cloths at her feet, dipped in her blood. With her body was found that of Valerian her husband: the Pope caused them to be translated to her church in the city, as also the bodies of Tiburtius and Maximus, and of the Popes Urban and Lucius, which lay in the adjoining cemetery of Prætextatus, on the same Appian Road. (Lives of the Saints, November 22d.) Musical and other historians have not been able to assign any better reason for honouring Cecilia as the patroness of music, than what may be found in her Acts, which still exist in Surius, but are now considered as of no authority. Yet as they were credited in more credulous times, painters fixed upon organs as the appropriate emblem of this saint; musicians chose her for their patroness; and poets have described her as the inventress of the organ, and represented charming angels as leaving their celestial spheres to listen to her harmony. The earliest notice of her as the tutelar saint of music, seems to have been in the works of the great painters of the Italian school; some representing her as performing on the harp, and others on the organ. Raphael, in his celebrated portrait of this saint, has placed in her hands a column of organ-pipes, or rather the front of a portable instrument called the "regals," which used to be carried by one person, and played by another, in processions. There is another well-known and admirable painting of Cecilia by Domenichino.

Heliogabalus was succeeded in the empire by his cousin, Alexander Severus, when sixteen years of age; but at that juvenile period he promised to adorn the throne as much as some of his predecessors appeared to endeavour to disgrace it. His mother had been industrious in her attempts to form his character, and the tutors who had the care of his education were evidently selected for their principles. If Heliogabalus had lived much longer, he would have rendered all these preparations for empire nugatory and futile; for in the year previous to his death, when he caused the title of Cæsar to be imposed on his cousin Alexander, he removed from his company all those individuals who had been selected by his mother, some of whom he banished, and others he put to death. It is by no means improbable that some of the sufferers were Christians, especially as Alexander's early impressions concerning Christianity were favourable; for he was a man of wholly different character from his vicious predecessor, and his predilection towards the faith of Christ proceeded from entirely different grounds. The sensibilities of this Prince were alive to all that was good; and he manifested a reverence for everything connected with religion; but he was certainly not a Christian. Whatever Alexander had heard or read of the Saviour, raised in him feelings of admiration; but he held precisely the same sentiments with regard to other historical characters, some of whom were suspicious, and others were unequivocally bad: thus he professed to worship not only Christ and Abraham, but Orpheus and Apollonius,—the latter being, without doubt, the notorious impostor, Apollonius of Tyana. According, however, to Lampridius, he not only showed to the Christians toleration, but went so far as to offer divine honours to Christ, and had thoughts of erecting a temple to him. We must take all these expressions with considerable hesitation, especially when we bear in mind the fact, that he had images of certain persons which he placed in his chamber, and prayed to them every morning. If this account be correct, we may acknowledge Alexander to have been superstitious, and prejudiced in favour of idolatry; but in no degree inclined to the faith of the Gospel, so as to embrace it.

By the more modern Christian historians, Julia Mammæa, the mother of Alexander, is supposed to have been a convert to Christianity; but without sufficient authority. It is true that, under the present reign, a greater measure of prosperity and peace had fallen to the lot of the church than under any preceding Emperors; for which the church was chiefly indebted to Mammæa, whose influence over her son was almost unlimited, and whose sentiments with regard to the doctrines of Christ were kind and propitious; and therefore many have thought that we cannot withhold our credit from such accumulated testimony in her favour. Eusebius and Jerome give their opinion with a considerable degree of reserve.* Both these writers advert to the visit of Origen to the court of Alexander, at Antioch, to give Mammæa, for a time, the advantage of conversation and instruction; but neither of them asserts that she so far yielded to the arguments of Origen, as to abandon the superstitions in which

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vi., cap. 21; Hieron., De Viris Illustribus, cap. 54.

she had been educated, and to embrace Christianity. Eusebius applies to Mammæa the epithet of θεοσεβεσατης, and Jerome styles her *religiosa*;* but these designations do not possess sufficient weight of themselves to place the fact of her conversion beyond dispute, since we find them indiscriminately applied by the early writers to all men, whether Christians or not, who professed a due reverence for the supreme Being, and manifested an anxious wish for eternal life. On the other hand, there are to be perceived in the life of this lady manifest indications of a mind labouring under the influence of superstition, and devoted to the worship of the false gods of the Romans. These, added to other considerations, have led several writers of acknowledged celebrity and merit to maintain that Mammæa continued unshaken in her attachment to the religion of her ancestors.

Alexander was addicted to the then-prevailing fashion of *eclecticism*, and he included Christianity among those religions from whence he drew his stores: he therefore gathered much from the system and precepts of the Gospel. Observing that the Christians never filled up any ecclesiastical appointment without publishing the names of the candidates, and consulting the people as to their fitness, he ordered the same to be done in appointing the Governors of provinces, or any public officer.† The Emperor also quoted the Christians for a saying which he was very fond of, and which he ordered to be inscribed on many public buildings: "Do not to another what you would not have him do to you."‡ But nothing exhibits more strongly his tolerant disposition, than the decision which he made when the keepers of a public-house claimed a piece of ground that had been occupied by the Christians: the Emperor adjudged it to the latter; adding the remark, that it was much more fitting for the Most High to be worshipped there in any manner, than for the ground to be employed as a pot-house.§ It would appear, from this circumstance, that the Christians had now erected buildings in Rome, unless we suppose that they were accustomed to meet for worship in the open air, which is by no means probable; and though the early history of the Bishops of Rome is fraught with fabulous and legendary tales, there is some evidence that a church was erected about this period by Callistus.‖ To the astonishment of the Heathen and the Jew, churches began to

* Lampridius, in his Life of Severus, Histor. Script. August., terms the Empress-mother, "sancta mulier," which in point of force corresponds precisely with the epithets bestowed on her by Jerome and Eusebius.

† "Ubi aliquos voluisset vel Rectores provinciis dare, vel præpositos facere vel Procuratores, nomina eorum proponebat, dicebatque grave esse, quum id Christiani et Judæi facerent in prædicandis Sacerdotibus qui ordinandi sunt, non fieri in provinciarum et Rectoribus, quibus et fortunæ hominum committerentur et capita." (Lampridius.)

‡ "Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris; quam sententiam usque adeo dilexit, ut et in palatio et in publicis operibus præscribi juberet." (Ibid.)

§ "Cum Christiani quendam locum, qui publicus fuerat occupassent, contra propinarii dicerent, sibi eum deberi, rescripsit, melius esse ut quomodocumque illic Deus colatur, quam propinariis dedatur." (Ibid.)

‖ The church which now bears the name of S. Maria in Trastavere, and which is undoubtedly an ancient structure, is said to have been built by Callistus; and it is even conjectured by Baronius, that this was the very building which Alexander allowed the Christians to retain. (Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist.)

rise in different parts of the empire : * Christianity had as yet appeared without temple or altar ; the religious assemblies of the faithful had been held in privacy ; it was yet domestic worship. Even the Jew had his public synagogue, or his more secluded *proseucha ;* but where the Christian met was indicated by no separate and distinguished dwelling ; the cemetery of their dead, the sequestered grove, the private chamber, contained their peaceful assemblies. Their privacy was at once their security and their danger. On the one hand, there was no well-known edifice in which the furious and excited rabble could surprise the general body of the Christians, and wreak its vengeance by indiscriminate massacre : on the other, the jealousy of the government against all private associations would be constantly kept on the alert ; and a religion without a temple was so inexplicable a problem to pagan feeling, that it would strengthen and confirm all the vague imputations of atheism, or of criminal licence in these mysterious meetings, which seemed to shun the light of day. The buildings which the faithful erected, as yet, were of modest height and unpretending form ; but the religion was thus publicly recognised as one of the various forms of worship which the government did not prohibit from opening the gates of its temples to mankind.

Notwithstanding this boasted tranquil state of the church, we must not imagine that the day was cloudless, though the prospect were cheering. The spirit of persecution was not allowed to become extinct ; so that its voice was occasionally heard, and its victims were known. It appears to be a more difficult task to account for the afflictions which the Christians were compelled to undergo during the reign of Alexander, than during the days of Heliogabalus. What has been said of the latter forbidding every kind of worship except that of the sun, makes it highly probable that the cemeteries were places of great resort during that reign ; and the indiscriminating cruelty of the Emperor constituted the catacombs at once the place of assembly, of martyrdom, and of burial to thousands. Although Alexander enacted no law by which Christianity was received among the "religiones licitæ," and we have no proof that he himself ever persecuted the Christians, the Martyrologies mention the names of several persons who suffered in the reign of Alexander ; and though these records are at variance with what we have seen of his education and character, we cannot condemn these traditions as being utterly without foundation. It is possible, that though the Emperor himself was inclined to toleration, he might have had persons around him who thought it their duty to harass the Christians. We are informed of several learned and distinguished men, principally lawyers, who formed a kind of council ; and, while the Emperor was young, they probably had the direction of many of the affairs of the state, the

* Tillemont, as Gibbon observes, assigns the date of the earliest Christian churches to the reign of Alexander Severus ; Mr. Moyle, to that of Gallienus. The difference is very slight ; and, after all, the change from a private building set apart for a particular use, and a public one of no architectural pretensions, may have been almost imperceptible. The passage of Lampridius appears conclusive in favour of Tillemont.

chief of whom were Ulpian,* Paul, and Sabinus, whose decisions have been preserved by Justinian. Unless the Martyrologies have entirely spoken falsehood, Ulpian was a prime mover in many acts of persecution. Lactantius says, that the lawyer bore Christianity such implacable hatred, that in a work which he published on the duties of a Proconsul, he made a collection of all the edicts and laws which had been promulgated during the preceding reigns against the Christians, doubtless to incite the Governors to proceed against them in their respective provinces. Dr. Burton says, "It is much to be regretted that such a collection, which, though painful, would be highly interesting, is lost; but we may learn, from some fragments of the work which remain, that the author would decidedly have encouraged intolerance in a Magistrate; and since he enjoyed the chief confidence of the Emperor, was his principal Secretary, and Commander of the prætorian guards, it is not improbable that he sometimes persuaded his master that the Christians should be punished;" † for he would not fail to make use of the power which his office gave him, whenever he possessed an opportunity.

Considerable difficulties attend the history of Callistus, Bishop of Rome. Baronius, the annalist, supposes him to have been martyred in the third year of Alexander; and some ancient accounts ascribe his death to the Emperor's own order. Other calculations place his death in the year 222, or even earlier; and some attribute his martyrdom to the capricious cruelty of Heliogabalus. If we had sufficient credulity to believe all that is contained in what are termed his "Acts," he was thrown into a pit, after having been put to death in some popular tumult. His name is particularly connected with one of those cemeteries or excavations in the neighbourhood of Rome, as furnishing places of refuge, meeting, and sepulture to the early church. The number of the catacombs have been made to amount to forty-three; and one bears the name of Callistus to the present day. Callistus was succeeded in his bishopric by Urban, a native of Rome, and the son of Pontianus: as he came to the episcopate in the comparative peaceful time of Alexander Severus, he knew how to improve that advantage for the benefit of the church. Popular commotions, and the perverse disposition of some of the provincial Governors, gave to several of the faithful an opportunity of glorifying God "in the fires;" amongst whom was Urban, who suffered in a brief but sanguinary persecution, raised against the Christians by Turcius Almachius, the Governor of Rome, in the absence, and without the knowledge, of the Emperor. Many suffered with him, whom he

* Domitius Ulpianus was the tutor, friend, and Minister of Alexander: when the latter became Emperor, one of his first acts was to recall Ulpian, who had been exiled by Heliogabalus, and to place him at the head of his Council of State. He was also made Secretary of State, and ultimately Prætorian Prefect. He lived in great repute for his wise and virtuous administration, until the Emperor, probably at his suggestion, undertook the dangerous task of reforming the army. The discontent of the soldiery broke out into a mutiny; and Ulpian, pursued by a body of them, was massacred in the presence of the Emperor and his mother, in the year 288. Ulpian has obtained the praise of all the Heathen; but the Christians accuse him of a determined enmity to their company.

† Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxiii.

greatly encouraged by his example and counsel. The exact year in which he was put to death is unknown. It is also stated, that a youth named Agapetus, of the age of fifteen years, was apprehended and condemned at Preneste in Italy, because he steadily refused to sacrifice to idols: he was first scourged with whips, and then hung up by the feet; afterwards he had hot water cast upon him, and then was thrown to the wild beasts; none of which producing any impression, he was beheaded with the sword. The Prefect, who is said to have been an individual of the name of Antiochus, while witnessing the infliction of these tortures, fell from his judicial seat, exclaiming that his bowels were in flames within him, and expired.*

CHAPTER VI.

Death of Alexander Severus, and his Mother Mammæa—Sanguinary Character of Maximin, the Successor of Alexander—Reasons for his Conduct—Nature of this Persecution—Its Extent—General Aspect of Christianity—Persecution of Origen—The Montanists—Literary Labours of Origen—Martyrdom of Calepodius—Pammachius—Simplicius—Quiritus—Martina—Hippolytus, a Christian Bishop—Who he was—Death of Maximin—Gordian—the Character of his Reign—Philip—His Treatment of the Christians—Persecution at Alexandria—Martyrdom of Metra, Quinta, Apollonia, and Serapion—Popular Character of the Persecution—Testimony of Origen—Cyprian—Importance of his Writings—His Conversion—Is elected Bishop of Carthage—Dethronement and Death of Philip—Election of Decius to the Empire—Lamentable State of the Church—Persecution morally requisite—Supposed Motives instigating the Persecution—The Decian Edict—Its Operation—Eusebius—Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria—His Account of this Persecution—Gregory of Nyssa—Gregory Thaumaturgus—Description of the Imperial Edict—Deportment of the Sufferers—Alexandrian Christians—Pierius—Sabinus, the Roman Governor—Capture of the Bishop of Alexandria—Chæremon—Celibacy at this Period unknown—The Saracens—Julian—His Martyrdom—The Sufferings of Besas, Makar, Epimachus, Alexander, Ammoniarum, Mercuria, Dionysia, Heron, Ater, Isidorus, Dioscorus, and others—Nemesion, Ammon, Zeno, Ptolemy, and Ingenes suffer—The iron Scraper—The Fires into which the Martyrs were thrown in primitive Persecutions—Fear of the Magistrates respecting the Soldiery—Martyrdom of Ischurion—The Courage and Fortitude of Numidicus—Filial Affection of his Daughter—Interesting Examples of Suffering—Affecting Testimony of Confessors—Martyrdom of Fabian, Bishop of Rome—Story of his Conversion—Cardinal Cusani—State of Christianity in Rome—Influence of the Bishops—Its Effects upon the ruling Powers—The Persecution increases in Inten-

* Other martyrs are recorded; namely, Calepodius, a Minister of Rome, whose body was first drawn through the city, and afterwards cast into the Tiber. Palmatius, a Senator of Rome, with his wife and children, and others, both men and women, to the number of forty-two, and also another noble Senator of Rome, named Simplicius, all of whom together, and on the same day, had their heads struck off, which were afterwards exhibited on various gates of the city as a terror to all, that none should profess the name of Christ. Besides these, Quiritius also suffered, a nobleman of Rome, who, with his mother Julitta, and a great number more, were put to death. Also Tiberius and Valerian, citizens of Rome, and brothers, suffered at the same time: first being bruised and broken with bats, and afterwards beheaded. Vincentius, Bergomensis, and Henry of Herford, mention Martina, a Christian virgin, who, after numerous bitter punishments, being constant to the faith, was slain by the sword. Some of the above probably suffered under Maximin, or Decius. (Foxe's Acts and Monuments.)

sity—Death of Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem—Origen is imprisoned—Babylas, Bishop of Antioch, incarcerated, and dies—Eudæmon—Retirement of Cyprian—The Cause of his Flight—His own Vindication—His Exile profitable to the Church—Continuance of the Persecution—Retreat of Paul—Asceticism—Distinction between the Monks and Ascetics—Monachism, when it appeared—Therapeutæ—Clement—Pythagoras—Martyrdom of Agatha—Brutal Conduct of Quintien—Christianity in Carthage—The Lapsed—Cause of Defection in the Church—The Thurificati—The Sacrificati—The Libellatici—What?—Fearful State of Morality in the Christian Community—Leniency of the Confessors and Martyrs—Especially of Lucian—Letters of Peace—Instructions of Cyprian—His Solicitude for the Welfare of the Church—Conduct of the Roman Clergy—Schism at Carthage—Novatus—Felicissimus—Fortunatus—State of the Nation—Cyprian returns, and decides respecting the Lapsed—Election of Cornelius to the Bishopric of Rome—Martyrdom of Moyses—Julian—Peter, and others—Lucian and Marcian—Trypho and Respicius—Cyril, Bishop of Gortyna—Theodotus, and others—Theodora—Warlike Preparations of Decius, and his subsequent Death.

Alexander Severus and his parent met with a tragical end. An insurrection of the northern nations called the Emperor from that state of tranquillity and repose into which he had fallen, to meet the foe, who had already crossed the Rhine and Danube, and filled all Italy and Rome with consternation. Notwithstanding the enemy was both powerful and numerous, he arrested their progress, and daily gained important advantages over them. But although Alexander was enabled to vanquish the barbarians abroad, he met with far more treacherous usage from his own countrymen, and in his own camp. The legions who had taken a station at Moguntia, or Mentz, had been fearfully corrupted in the reign of Heliogabalus, and ever since had been accustomed to wallow in rapine and licentiousness. Alexander could not endure their lawlessness, nor they his discipline. The disaffected part exclaimed loudly against the well-known penuriousness of Mammæa, who was then, as at other times, in the camp with her son. These mutinous feelings were greatly increased by the artifices of Maximin, who, gathering the soldiers together, harangued them in violent and incendiary language, "to abandon a niggardly woman, and a dispirited boy, who could tamely truckle to a mother's tyranny; and to join themselves to a man of courage, who had long been their companion in arms, and an experienced Captain." Language such as this did not fail to produce a corresponding impression in the minds of those to whom it was addressed; and the soldiers resolved to put Alexander to death, which they shortly afterwards effected.

The peace which Christianity had enjoyed under the well-disposed Alexander, was disturbed by the violent accession of a Thracian savage, who, immediately after the murder of the late Emperor, was declared ruler, and a reign of terror may be then said to have begun. The first care of Maximin was to kill all the persons who had been attached to his predecessor,* and it was calculated that not less than

* It is said by Eusebius, (Hist. Eccles., lib. vi., cap. 28,) "that Maximin, being inflamed with hatred against the family of Alexander, which was filled with Christians, was induced to commence a persecution of these people; but he adds, that the Emperor ordered the Bishops alone to be put to death, as the authors of evangelical preaching. Now, unless I am altogether deceived, these accounts are apparently quite repugnan

four thousand met their death in this way: Eusebius also relates the important fact, that there were several Christians in the imperial household who suffered among the rest. Maximin, doubtless, cared little or nothing about religion: it is certain, however, that the beginning of his reign was marked by a special persecution against the Christians. "He is said to have aimed his measures particularly at the head of the church; and the scheme seems to have been so well imagined, and the execution so immediate, that we must trace it to some persons of more calculation and contrivance than the savage who was now upon the throne. He was, perhaps, pleased to have the number of victims increased, and the more so if he were persuaded that the Christians were attached to his predecessor: but he probably knew little of any difference of creeds; and the persecution may be ascribed, in the first instance, to other persons rather than to himself. We may be sure, that there were many who had long watched the rising sect with jealousy and hatred. The favours which they had received from Alexander and his mother must have greatly displeased all real supporters of the old religion; and if we knew more of the plot, which raised Maximin to the throne, we should probably find that a wish to suppress Christianity was one of the causes which led to the death of Alexander. When the deed was perpetrated, it was, perhaps, politic to strike terror into the Christians, who might otherwise have been inclined to avenge the loss of their protector." *

The persecution appears not to have been universal, and, doubtless, it depended in a considerable degree upon the will or caprice of the Magistrates and Governors. The decree of the tyrant, probably, did not embrace all the Christian Bishops and teachers,† but merely such

to each other. If his hatred to the family of Alexander gave rise to this fresh persecution of the Christians, the tyrant's fury ought not to have been directed against the Bishops, of whom there were none connected with that family, but against the family itself. In doing this he would have taken his revenge; whereas, by his punishment of the Bishops, no sort of evil or detriment whatever could have been felt by the immediate objects of his hatred, the surviving Ministers and servants of his predecessor. The difficulty, however, that here suggests itself, will be overcome, if by κοτος, the 'anger or hatred,' here spoken of by Eusebius, we understand a fear united with hatred, an interpretation that seems perfectly admissible; for whom we fear, we naturally regard with hatred. The tyrant then feared that the family of the murdered Alexander might conspire against him, and endeavour to avenge the slaughter of their excellent master; and hence he was led to regard the different members of it with a deep and rancorous hatred. With a view to deliver himself from this state of anxiety, he resolved on putting the Christian Bishops to death, trusting that the Ministers and servants of Alexander, being thus deprived of their advisers and guides, would not have it in their power to concert among themselves anything of which he need be apprehensive. Some one, no doubt, who imagined himself well informed on the subject, had suggested to the Emperor, that the Christians depended entirely on the guidance and will of the Bishops, and that, consequently, were these to be taken from them, every ground for apprehension would be effectually removed. Unless the matter be explained in this way, I cannot possibly understand how Maximin's hatred of the family of Alexander should have given occasion for the slaughter of the Christian Bishops." (Mosheim's Commentaries.)

* Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxiv.

† "Although it is expressly stated by Eusebius, that Maximin commanded all the Christian Bishops and teachers to be put to death, I yet very much doubt whether the tyrant's injunctions actually reached to such a direful and inhuman extent: I suspect, rather, that the Emperor's enmity was confined merely to those Christian teachers who had lived on terms of intimacy with Alexander and his mother, and, with the con-

of them as lived on terms of intimacy and friendship with his predecessor: few instances of the martyrdom of Christian Prelates are met with during his reign, nor were they in any considerable degree persecuted. It is obvious, that in certain provinces the oppression of the Christians was, under the government of this Emperor, carried on upon a more extensive scale, its fury not being restricted to any class of them in particular, but directing itself indiscriminately against them all; and, perhaps, may be attributed not so much to the edict of the Emperor, as to the injustice of men in power, or to the *vox populi* of the community, who were ready to imagine themselves grieved by the toleration of the Christian religion. We therefore can discover no difficulty in giving full credence to the statements of those who maintain that, for the whole of the three years during which Maximin reigned, the Christians were, in various places, exposed to all the evils of persecution.*

nivance of the former, had been the instruments of converting a considerable portion of the imperial family to the Christian faith. The chief of these was Origen, who Maximin knew had not long before been called to court, and, therefore, named him as one of the first who was to be sought after, and put to death. The testimony of Orosius is clear as to this. (Hist., lib. vii., cap. xix.) It is well known, that in order to avoid the Emperor's fury, Origen was obliged to remain for two years in concealment at Cæsarea. Being thus disappointed of finding him, Maximin vented his indignation on his two most intimate friends, the one a man of eminence named Ambrosius, the other, the Presbyter Protoctætus: who, after being loaded with injuries and insult, were, by his command, banished into Germany. (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vi., cap. xxviii.) Besides these, the instances appear to have been very few, merely one here and there, of Christian Priests and Bishops, who were persecuted with any degree of severity under the reign of this Emperor. Maximinus, says Sulpitius Severus, (Hist. Sacr., lib. ii., cap. 32,) 'nonnullarum ecclesiarum clericos vexavit.' But in what way are we to account for this paucity of martyrs and confessors amongst the Bishops and teachers, if Maximin, by his edict, gave command for their entire extermination? The page of history would have been crowded with the acts of some hundreds of martyrs of the sacred order, put to death under this most inhuman Emperor, had his denunciation been directed against the Pastors of the church generally, and without discrimination. Every seeming obscurity, with regard to this matter, becomes at once dissipated, if, conformably to what is expressly stated by ancient writers, we conceive a hatred or fear of the family of Alexander to have given rise to this persecution of the Christian teachers; for this one circumstance alone may very justly lead us to conclude, that the Emperor's fury was directed merely against such of them as had lived on terms of friendship or intimacy with Alexander and his imperial family." (Mosheim's Commentaries.)

* Mosheim's Commentaries, On the Affairs of the Christians, vol. iii., p. 53. This indefatigable historian further says, that the persecution of the Christians under Maximin must be attributed to other causes than to commands which he issued. Origen says, that earthquakes had been felt in divers places, and that the populace, after their accustomed manner, attributing this calamity to their toleration of the Christian religion, commenced a severe persecution against those who professed it. Add to this, what is said by him, to the same effect, in his "Exhortation to the Martyrs," which was written under the reign of Maximin. To the same cause, and not to Maximin's cruelty, is to be ascribed the afflictions experienced in Cappadocia, and the neighbouring regions; which, however, were, in a certain degree, augmented by the injustice of Serenianus. For this we have the testimony of Firmilian, in his epistle to Cyprian. (Cypriani Opera, Epist. lxxiv., p. 128. Edit. 8vo. Paris, 1836.) From the same authority we also learn, that it was not in all the provinces that the Christians were persecuted, but merely in those which had more particularly experienced the natural calamities referred to. If this persecution were founded on an imperial edict, it would have taken place in every part of the Roman world. Probably, in the first effervescence of his wrath, he might issue orders for the apprehension of Origen and certain others, whom he knew to have lived on terms of intimacy with the preceding Emperor and his mother; but that after a short period, the aspect of affairs being changed, and other things drawing off his attention, this sudden gust of passion was subdued without producing any further effects.

Christianity in the imperial city experienced the persecution during the reign of Maximin somewhat severely, although he himself did not visit the capital during any part of the three years that he held the empire: Vitalianus, who commanded the prætorian guards at Rome, was a man of singular cruelty. Pontianus, the Bishop of that see, is supposed by some writers to have been put to death, for his freedom and boldness in reproving the idolatry of the inhabitants of that city, and in the island of Sardinia, whence he was banished.* His successor, Anteros, held the see only one month; which, perhaps, confirms the statement made by Baronius, that he also suffered martyrdom. There can be no doubt that the eastern churches felt the fury of the persecution greatly, and some particulars have been preserved to us relating to Cappadocia and Palestine. One writer asserts, without any hesitation, that Origen was the chief cause of the persecution excited by Maximin; and though the authority is slight, the remark may be so far true, that the great fame of Origen had contributed to raise in the Heathen a desire to exterminate the Christians. Origen was himself a sufferer; and for a while he was obliged to withdraw from his literary retreat at Cæsarea. His two pupils, Athenodorus and Theodorus, left him and went to Alexandria; from which we may, perhaps, infer, that Egypt was one of those countries which was not visited by persecution; and in Alexandria the two brothers would have the advantage of hearing lectures from Dionysius. Origen now availed himself of the invitation which Firmilianus had given him to go and see him in his own country. Firmilianus was Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia; and at first it was perhaps safer to reside there than in Palestine. But Origen soon found that the storm followed him. This part of Asia Minor had lately been visited by tremendous earthquakes, which swallowed up whole cities, and the calamity, as usual, was attributed to the Christians. Serenianus was now the Governor of Cappadocia; and Firmilianus, describing this period after a lapse of twenty years, speaks of him as a persecutor of singular severity. It is remarkable, however, that in the midst of these troubles the heresy of Montanus made some progress in that part of Asia. A female of that persuasion had the good fortune to predict the earthquake; and the completion of her prophecy confirmed the pretensions to inspiration which were made by the Montanists. Origen, in the mean time, was enabled to save himself by the kindness of a female named Juliana, who lived at Cæsarea,† and who afforded him for two years an asylum in her house. She also supplied him with the use of a library; and the greatest of all his literary works was, perhaps, carried on with much activity during these two years' imprisonment at Cappadocia.‡

* Eusebius positively declares, that his death occurred at the commencement of the following reign. (Eccles. Hist., lib. vi., cap. 29.)

† Palladius, Lausiac, cap. li.; Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vi., cap. 17.

‡ Burton's Lectures on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxiv. Origen's laborious edition of the Septuagint is alluded to. The Jews were accused of having purposely altered it; and the mere errors of transcribers, during a period of four hundred years, could not fail to have introduced many variations. Origen undertook to publish a more correct edition of it; or, rather, to bring together all the known translations which had been made of the Old Testament into Greek.

Among several, of whom we have some indistinct account, who suffered in this outrage upon Christianity, were Calepodius, a Minister of Rome, whom the persecutors first dragged about the streets of that city, and afterwards fastened a millstone about his neck, and threw him into the Tiber; Pammachius, one of the Senators, who, it is said, with his wife and children, and others to the number of forty-two, together with Simplicius, another Senator, were beheaded, and their heads affixed to the gates of the city to deter others from embracing Christianity; Quiritus, a nobleman of Rome, with his mother Julia, and others, were put to the torture, and various kinds of death; among whom also was Martina, a noble maiden, who, when neither persuasions nor torments could prevail upon her to renounce the faith of Christ, perished by the sword. Some would add to this number the name of Hippolytus, a Christian Bishop; but Jerome does not mention the name of the church over which he presided. Photius says, he was a disciple of Irenæus, and also of Clement of Alexandria, and tutor of Origen. He was a considerable writer; but few of his works have come down to us. Jerome styles him "a most holy and eloquent man;" Chrysostom gives to him the honourable epithets of "a source of light, a faithful witness, a most holy Doctor, and a man full of sweetness and charity." Theodoret classes him with Irenæus, and designates both "spiritual fountains in the church." Some of the Eastern calendars say that he was put to death by drowning; others, that for the profession of his faith in the Redeemer, he was tied to a wild horse, and dragged through fields, bushes, and stony places, until he expired. Prudentius tells us, that during this brief persecution many were slain and buried in heaps; and, doubtless, many more would have perished, had not the Almighty, in compassion to his people, shortened the days of the persecutor. The reign of the tyrant lasted only three years, of which period it may be said, that his persecution of the Christians was, to a certain extent, local; his cruelties to all mankind were insatiable, and not to be tolerated. The Senate and people of Rome stood in fear of him, and prayed that he might never be seen among them.* Most of the provinces groaned under the burdens which Maximin imposed upon them; and Africa first showed its utter detestation of him, by means of his Procurator, who collected the revenues of the Emperor with insupportable outrage and extortion, pillaging the goods, and taking away the lives, of many excellent men. A conspiracy was formed, and Maximin was destroyed.

Maximin was succeeded by Gordian, whose reign was, on the whole, advantageous to the empire, and a period of tranquillity to the Christian church. The "banished ones" were recalled, and general confidence among all classes of society was restored: this may be satisfactorily inferred from the meetings which were held in different parts of the world for the suppression of heresy. Indeed, all the Emperors who were born in the Asiatic provinces, were the least

* "For they had heard, that in the method of his discipline, he crucified some, stuffed others into the bodies of beasts newly slain, cast some alive to wild beasts, and cudgelled others to death, without distinction of rank or quality." (Echard.)

unfriendly to Christianity. Their religion, whatever it might be, was less uncongenial to some of the forms of the new faith; it was a kind of eclecticism of different Eastern religions, which, in general, was least inclined to intolerance; at any rate, it was uninfluenced by national pride, which was now become the main support of Roman Paganism. Gordian was a mere stripling, who, however, with the assistance of his father-in-law Misitheus, a man of great fortitude and courage, so ordered public affairs, that for the six years during the reign of his son, the Christians enjoyed a season of uninterrupted security and repose. In the year 241, Sapor, the King of Persia, invaded the Eastern frontier of the empire, when Gordian marched against him, and defeated him. He did not, however, return home to enjoy the fruits of his victory; not having been able to prevent an aspiring oriental soldier in his army, of the name of Philip, from murdering Misitheus, and usurping the office of Prætorian Præfect; Gordian himself, within a short time after, fell under the machinations of the perfidious Arab, who immediately laid hold of the imperial sceptre, and, in conjunction with his son, for the space of nearly five years administered the government, during the whole of which period he proved himself a firm friend and protector of Christianity.

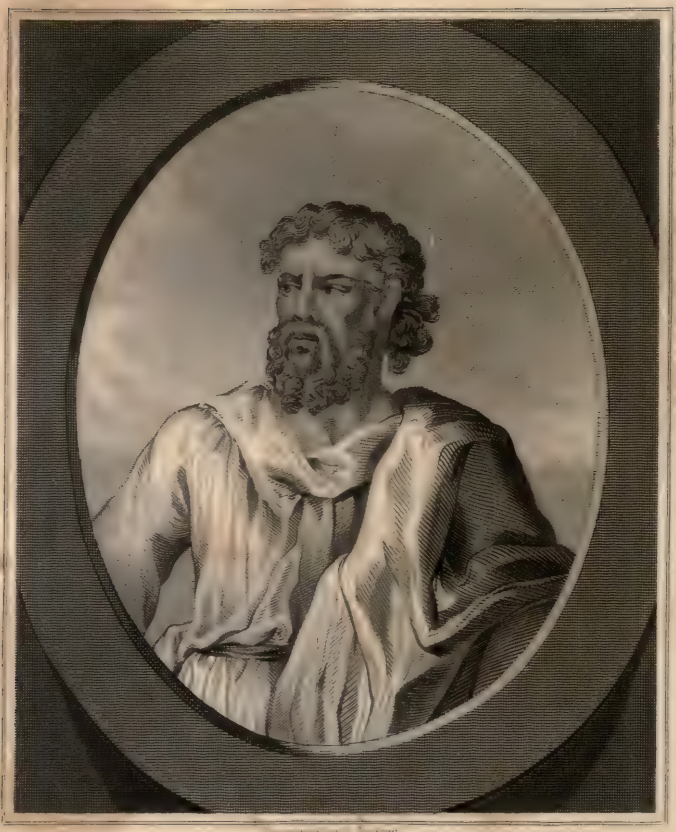
The kindness which Philip manifested towards the Christians, gave rise to a report which obtained very general credit with the writers of after-days; namely, that both the Emperor and his son, having renounced the superstitious worship of the heathen deities, were privately devoted to the Christian religion; but whether this report is deserving of credit, or ought rather to be regarded as a vulgar tale that arose out of the Emperor's kindness and good-will towards the Christians, has been made the subject of much disputation among the learned.

About the year 248, which was the last year but one of the reign of Philip, a persecution of the Christians broke out at Alexandria. The Emperor was, doubtless, altogether unconscious of it, and it appears to have been a mere ebullition of popular feeling. The advocates of idolatry were enraged at the progress of the Gospel; and great cruelties were exercised in urging the Christians to abjure their faith. This continued till the Easter of 249, when the Heathen began to quarrel among themselves from some political differences, and thus a short respite was given to the Christians; but their sufferings were only a prelude to a much more extensive persecution. The names of those who, at this season, were martyred for the sake of Christ, that have come down to us, are but few. Eusebius, who quotes from the epistle which Dionysius wrote to Fabius, Bishop of Antioch, relates the conflict through which the church had to pass. "The persecution with us did not begin with the imperial edict, but preceded it a whole year. And a certain prophet and poet, inauspicious to the city, whoever he was, excited the mass of the Heathen against us, stirring them up to their native superstition. Stimulated by him, and taking full liberty to exercise any kind of wickedness, they considered this the only piety, and the worship of their demons,—to slay

us. First, then, seizing a certain aged man named Metra, they called upon him to utter impious expressions, and, as he did not obey, they beat his body with clubs, and pricked his face and eyes; after which they led him away to the suburbs, where they stoned him. Next they led a woman named Quinta, who was a believer, to the temple of an idol, and attempted to force her to worship; but when she turned away in disgust, they tied her by the feet, and dragged her through the whole city, over the rough stones of the paved streets, dashing her against the millstones, and scourging her at the same time, until they brought her to the same place, where they stoned her. Then, with one accord, all rushed upon the houses of the pious, and whomsoever of their neighbours they knew, they drove thither in all haste, and despoiled and plundered them, setting apart the more valuable of the articles for themselves; but the more common and wooden furniture they threw about, and burned in the roads, presenting a scene like a city taken by the enemy. The brethren retired, and gave way; and, like those to whom Paul bears witness, they also regarded the plunder of their goods with joy. They also seized that admirable virgin, Apollonia, then in advanced age, and, beating her jaws, they broke out all her teeth; and, kindling a fire before the city, threatened to burn her alive, unless she would repeat their impious expressions. She appeared at first to shrink a little; but when suffered to go, she suddenly sprang into the fire, and was consumed. They also seized a certain Serapion in his house, and after torturing him with the severest cruelties, and breaking all his limbs, threw him headlong from an upper story. And, further, there was no way, no public road, no lane, where we could walk, whether by day or by night, but they, at all times and places, cried out, that whoever would refuse to repeat those impious expressions, he should be immediately dragged forth and burned. These things continued to prevail, for the most part, after this manner. But as the sedition and a civil war overtook these wretches, their cruelty was diverted from us to one another. We then drew a little breath, whilst their rage against us was abated." Thus far Eusebius.*

We cannot fail, at this place, to revert to the remarkable productions of Origen, who wrote in these days concerning the persecution which the church had hitherto endured, its external condition, and its future prospects. He says, with regard to the earlier persecutions, "Although the Christians, who were commanded not to defend themselves by violence against their enemies, complied with this tender and humane precept; yet that which they never could have obtained, however powerful they might have been, had they been permitted to go to war, a few (so few, that they may be easily numbered) have, at times, suffered death for the Christian religion; and thus God has prevented a war of extermination against the whole body of Christians; for he wished their continuance,—he wished that the whole earth should be filled with their salutary and most holy doctrine. And, on the other hand, that the weaker brethren might take breath,

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vi., cap. 41.



and be relieved from the fear of death, God cared for the believers by so scattering, through his own mere will, all assaults upon them, that neither Emperor nor Governor, nor the multitude, should prevail against them further." He says, in reference to his own times, "God hath constantly caused the number of Christians to increase; their number is still daily on the increase, and he hath already given to them the free exercise of their religion, although a thousand obstacles opposed the propagation of the doctrine of Jesus in the world. But since it was God who willed that the doctrine of Jesus should become a blessing to the Heathen, all the assaults of men against other Christians have been brought to shame. And the more the Emperors, the Governors, and the multitude have sought to oppress the faithful, the more powerful have these latter become." He says, that among the multitude of those who embraced Christianity, were also many rich people, many in high offices, and rich and well-born women; that now a Christian Pastor might obtain honour and respect; but, nevertheless, that the contempt with which others treated him was greater than the reverence with which he was regarded by believers. He remarks, that, notwithstanding all this, even yet the horrible accusations against the Christians obtained belief with many who abominated holding the slightest intercourse with them, even speaking to them. He writes, that through God's will the persecutions against the church had now long since ceased; but, casting a glance into futurity, he adds, that this tranquillity would readily cease in its turn, whenever the calumniators of Christianity should again have spread abroad their sentiments; that the cause of the numerous seditions (during the later years of this Emperor) was the great number of the Christians, who had increased so much from not being persecuted. He foresaw, also, that the persecutions had not yet reached their limit, and that the opinion, "that the downfal of the state religion, and the irresistible propagation of Christianity, were bringing disaster on the Roman empire, would, sooner or later, again revive the flames of persecution;" but, he adds, "When God wills, we enjoy, in a wonderful manner, peace in a world which hates us, and we confide in Him who says, 'Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' He has indeed fulfilled his word! Inasmuch, then, as He who has overcome the world wills that we also should overcome, since he has received power from the Father, we confide in his victory. But if he will that we should again contend and battle for the faith, let the adversaries come, and we will say to them, 'We are able to do all things through Him that makes us strong,—Jesus Christ our Lord!'" He was persuaded that hereafter all other religions would fall to the ground, and Christianity alone would prevail.* What Origen predicted, ere long took place.

It was at this period of the history of the church that Cyprian is first introduced to our notice, who had succeeded Donatus in the bishopric of Carthage. A memoir of his life was written by Pontius,

* Neander's History of the Christian Religion and Church, vol. i., p. 128.

his Deacon; and it is much to be regretted, that one who must have known him so intimately, should have written in so incompetent a manner. The information to be gathered from this quarter is not only limited, but almost useless; much more that is intrinsically valuable may be collected from his own letters, which are happily extant, and which constitute a valuable treasury of ecclesiastical history, notwithstanding the contumely and contempt with which certain modern writers have spoken of all the works of the Fathers of the church. In the epistles of this early martyr, the spirit, taste, discipline, and habits of the times among Christians are strongly delineated, nor have we in this century any account to be compared with them. He was a professor of oratory in the city of Carthage, and a man of wealth and dignity. Cæcilius, a Carthaginian Presbyter, had the happiness, under God, to conduct him to the knowledge of Christ; and as a recognition of his debt of gratitude, he subsequently assumed the name of him who had been instrumental in his conversion, which took place about the year 246, two years before he was chosen Bishop of Carthage. Thirteen years completed his Christian career. He did not proceed by slow and painful steps of argument and reason to the elevation which he reached; but, by the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, he appears to have escaped those shoals and quicksands of false doctrine and heresy which had sadly tarnished the religious character and Christian profession of his eastern brethren, and rapidly to have arrived at "a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." It was no feigned virtue that advanced him in the estimation of the people. The love of Christ preponderated in him above all earthly considerations. The widow, the orphan, and the poor found in him a sympathizing benefactor. The Presbyter Cæcilius beheld with great delight the expanding virtues of his pupil, and at his death recommended to the care of Cyprian his wife and children. It was with reluctance that he observed the designs of the people to choose him the Bishop of that diocess: he retired to avoid their solicitations; but his house was besieged, and his retreat rendered impossible. Although he was raised to this responsible situation in the church almost by acclamation, his election was opposed by five Presbyters, one of whom was Novatus, whose factious disposition was the cause of much subsequent trouble to Cyprian. The Bishop received his appointment at a very critical period of the history of the church.

The death of Philip shortly followed. He was enjoying in comparative tranquillity possession of the empire, when the Goths, who had been previously repelled by Gordian, again passed through Mysia into the province of Thrace, spreading consternation and ruin in their march. The Emperor forthwith despatched Marinus, a valiant and expert General, to arrest their progress: this he accomplished, and subsequently, by the assistance of the soldiery, he resolved to assume the post of Emperor, and dethrone Philip; in great consternation Philip appealed to the Senate of Rome, and Decius was commissioned to lead an army against the Goths, and also to chastise the insolence of Marinus. In the latter he was forestalled by the soldiers, who

were as ready to deprive the usurper of life as they were to invest him with empire: him they slew, and chose Decius in his room. Philip, enraged at this double treachery, resolved to march against Decius in person; but the army, disgusted with the tyrannical behaviour of the Emperor, and conceiving that Decius was more worthy of the throne, deprived Philip of life in the city of Verona. This event took place about the month of July, 249.

The name of Decius stands prominent on the list of persecutors. Preceding Emperors connived at the ill treatment of the Christians, and Severus had issued a special edict against them; but from the death of that Emperor to the accession of Decius, a period of nearly thirty-eight years, the church had been free from general molestation, with the exception of the sufferings inflicted upon it by the barbarian Maximinus. As it had often happened before, that a persecuting government had followed a favourable one, as Marcus Aurelius had followed Antoninus Pius, and Maximin the Thracian, Alexander Severus, so it happened now, when Decius Trajanus, after conquering Philip the Arabian, had ascended the throne. It is but natural to imagine, that when an Emperor, zealously devoted to Paganism, followed one favourable to the Christians, he should feel himself bound, on that very account, to renew with redoubled strictness and severity, and to execute most thoroughly, the older laws, which had fallen into disuse, against the Christians, who, during his predecessor's reign, had increased so widely. The repose of the church, and its exemption from persecution, had exerted a lamentable influence; many, unmindful of their vocation to "contend earnestly for the faith," had suffered themselves to grow slothful; many who were destitute of vital Christianity had crept into the church, or remained in it because they were descended from Christian parents; rash and unwarrantable speculations were beginning to be entertained, and Cyprian informs us, that the manners of the Christians, and even of the Clergy, had been gradually becoming corrupt. He speaks of a secular, ostentatious spirit being very apparent. Marriages were formed with Heathens; and even Bishops were seen to neglect their flocks, and employ themselves in the most ordinary occupations, with a view to obtain money. It appeared absolutely necessary, that the power and truth of faith should be awakened by some new and terrible struggle, that the church at the same time should be purified, and the real and genuine members of it separated from the pretended. The believer needed again to go through the purifying influence of fire. So Cyprian, says Neander, after the first storm of persecution had subsided, taught the church of Carthage to view the whole. "When the cause of sickness," said he to his flock, "is once known, then the remedy for the wound may be found. The Lord wished to prove his people, because the life which God commands had been forgotten in the long time of our tranquillity. A divine chastisement hath, therefore, roused the church, fast sinking as it then was, into sleep and carelessness. Although by our sins we deserved more, yet the merciful God has so managed, that all which befell us appeared to be rather a trial than a persecution. While men forgot what the believers did in

the time of the Apostles, and what they ought always to do, they gave their minds, with insatiable desire, to the increase of their temporal power. Many of the Bishops, who ought by example and exhortation to lead the rest, neglected their divine calling, and busied themselves with the administration of worldly affairs." Since such, therefore, was the state of many churches, it is easy to see that a persecution, which in its first course seemed likely to be very severe, must have made a great impression on persons unaccustomed to trial.*

The motives which induced Decius to "stretch forth his hands to vex certain of the church," do not fully appear. Eusebius says, it was from hatred to Philip, who had systematically favoured the Christians; † and perhaps we might not be far from the truth, were we to conjecture that the reason why Decius persecuted the Christians, was similar to that which actuated Maximin, a fear that they might attempt to revenge the death of his predecessor, who had greatly patronized them, and by their rebellious machinations overthrow the newly-established government. Gregory of Nyssa ascribes it entirely to the Emperor's attachment to the old religion, and his dislike to the progress which the Gospel had been making. Paganism would not fail to discover, in the Christianized state of society, one cause of the decline of the empire; and the partial protection of a foreign religion by a foreign Emperor—now that Christianity had begun to erect temple against temple, altar against altar, and the Christian Bishop met the Pontiff on equal terms around the imperial throne—would be considered among the flagrant departures from the sound wisdom of ancient Rome. However, be that as it may, it was certainly the intention of the Emperor completely to crush Christianity. Eusebius says, quoting from Dionysius of Alexandria, that the persecution was "horribly terrific;" and describes it as having been of such a dreadful nature, that, had it been possible, it would have dismayed even the elect themselves. At the conclusion of the year 249, or at the commencement of 250, an edict was issued by Decius which ordered that the Christians should be compelled to sacrifice to the gods.‡ This mandate was sent to all the Governors

* Neander, Hist. of the Christ. Church, vol. i., p. 130.

† Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vi., cap. 39.

‡ Acta Pionii, apud Baron. ad An. 254. The precise nature of the edict is discussed by Mosheim. (De Rebus ante Constant. Sæc. III., sect. ii.) The edict itself was printed at Thoulouse in 1664; but it bears great marks of being spurious. (See Tillemont, Memoirs, tom. iii., art. 3, p. 310.) This persecution is reckoned the seventh by Eusebius, Jerome, Augustine, Orosius, and Sulp. Severus: others make it the eighth. The edict of Decius is not extant. It was probably verbose, with a preamble, setting forth,—"That the worship of the immortal gods was essential to the preservation of that empire, which, by the patronage of those deities, had been established and hitherto upheld; that the Emperors, Decius and his son, were Princes most religious and gracious; that, in prosecution of their general design to restore the purity of Roman manners, they were desirous of delivering the empire from the recent and criminal superstitions of the Christians. But as it was the duty of a humane Judge to endeavour to reclaim, rather than to punish, those deluded enthusiasts, the Emperors commanded, that if the Christians consented to cast a few grains of incense upon the altars of the idols, they should be dismissed from the tribunal in safety, and with applause; but if they persisted in their criminal obstinacy, they should then be capitally punished."

of provinces, who were threatened with bitter punishments themselves, if they proved remiss in applying insults and tortures to the Christians. In order to give full effect to the sanguinary law, Decius caused strict inquiry to be made respecting all persons suspected of non-observance of the state religion, and the faithful were to be required to comply with the ceremonies which were observed by the Paganism of Rome. If they refused, threats, and afterwards tortures, were to be made use of to compel obedience. If they proved faithful and undaunted, then sentence of death was pronounced upon them, and especially upon the Bishops, whom the Emperor detested the most: but the intention was at first to try how far they could succeed with the Christians by commands, by threats, by persuasion, and light punishments; they proceeded gradually to more severe measures; and the persecution by degrees extended itself into the provinces from the metropolis, where the presence of the Emperor, a declared enemy of the church, made the persecution at first the most severe. Wherever the edict of the Emperor was carried into execution, the first step was publicly to appoint a day on which all the Christians were to appear before the Magistrate, abjure their religion, and offer sacrifice. Those who fled their country before this day, escaped with the confiscation of their property, and a prohibition of their return, under the penalty of death. But when those who were unwilling to sacrifice at once their earthly possessions for a crown of glory in heaven; and waited for something that might open a middle path for them, did not appear of their own accord on the appointed day, the court of inquiry,* composed of the Magistrate and five of the principal citizens, began its operation. After repeated tortures, those who remained steadfast were thrown into prison, where hunger and thirst were employed to weaken their resolution. It does not appear that the punishment of death was very readily resorted to. Many Magistrates, who were more interested in extorting money than in executing the laws, or who wished to spare the Christians, agreed with them, that, although they did not really offer sacrifice, yet they would suffer a certificate *(libellum)* to be set forth, declaring that they had complied with the regulation of the edict.† Others, while they were anxious to escape the putting forth such a document, yet, without ever even appearing before a Magistrate, obtained the entry of their names in the magisterial protocol, or register, among those who had been obedient to the law. *(Acta facientes.)*‡ Many erred ignorantly; thinking that they remained true to their faith when they did nothing that was contrary to their religion, (neither offered sacrifice, nor burnt incense, &c.,) but only allowed others to say that they had done so. The church, however, always condemned this as a tacit abjuration of their faith.§

Dionysius, the Bishop of Alexandria, gives a very graphic

* "Quinque primores illi, qui edicto nuper magistratibus fuerant copulati, ut fidem nostram subruerent." (Cypriani Epist. xxxix. Paris, 1836.)

† Those who received such certificates, were called "Libellatici."

‡ "Qui acta fecissent, licet præsentes cum fierent non ad fuissent—ut sic scriberentur mandando." (Cyp. Epist., Paris, p. 37.)

§ Neander's History of the Christian Religion and Church, vol. i., p. 131.

description of the effects of this edict, as recorded by Eusebius.* "Soon a change in the government towards us was announced, and great danger threatened us. The decree † had arrived, very much like that which was foretold by our Lord, exhibiting the most dreadful aspect; so that, if it were possible, the very elect would stumble. All, indeed, were greatly alarmed, and many of the more eminent immediately gave way; others were tempted by the public offices they sustained; others were brought by their acquaintance, and when called by name approached the impure and unholy altars. Yet, pale and trembling, as if they were not only to sacrifice, but themselves to become the victims, and be offered to the idols, they were jeered by many of the surrounding multitude, and were obviously afraid either to die, or to perform the rites. But some advanced with greater readiness to the altars, affirming boldly that they had never been Christians; concerning whom the declaration of our Lord is most true, that they will scarcely be saved. Of the rest, some imitated the examples already recorded, others fled, and some were seized. Amongst the last, some either immediately, or after certain days, without having been brought to trial, abjured; and others, by force of torture, renounced the truth. But the firm and blessed pillars of the temple of our Lord, having been strengthened by Him, and having received might and fortitude according to the powerful faith that was in them, became noble witnesses of his kingdom." ‡ The sanguinary mandate was obeyed with cruel eagerness; and what we know of the sufferings at Rome, Alexandria, Carthage, and in Palestine, may convince us of the extent and severity of the persecution.

The Alexandrian Christians had enjoyed but a short respite from recent sufferings when the Decian edict was proclaimed. The names of several martyrs are recorded in the epistle of the Bishop, from

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vi., cap. 39.

† The fears of all Christians were wonderfully excited on the promulgation of the edict. The conclusion at which they arrived respecting it was, that it threatened the church with unheard-of calamities, and prescribed a new mode of assailing the Christians, more formidable than any that had ever before been resorted to. Gregory of Nyssa, in his life of Gregory Thaumaturgus, states, 1. That the Emperor, by his edict, commanded the Presidents and Magistrates to make use of every species of severity for bringing back the Christians to the worship of the heathen deities. 2. That he threatened the Presidents and Magistrates with severe and excruciating punishment themselves if they should be remiss, or discover any sort of tenderness, in carrying his commands into execution. 3. That in obedience to his precepts, the Presidents, laying aside every other concern, began immediately, with one consent, to persecute the Christians, publicly making known their powers, and causing it to be understood, that all who should refuse to abjure Christianity, would be subjected to every possible species of torture, and, if their pertinacity should prove invincible, be made to undergo even death itself. 4. That various species of torture, which had never before been heard of, were devised for this occasion, and frightful instruments that were to be employed in the infliction of these tortures exposed to public view. 5. That hence was generated incredible affright, and all things were thrown into the utmost confusion. As to what is to be met with in certain other authors, (we may mention in particular, Origen,) respecting the form and tenor of this terrible edict, it all merely tends to corroborate the above statements, without yielding anything whence further light is to be derived on the subject. Without doubt this edict was directed against Christians of every denomination, order, age, and sex: indeed, that such was the case is manifest even from the examples of those who suffered in the cause of Christ at Alexandria, as recorded by Dionysius.

‡ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vi., cap. 41.

which also we have seen that not a few saved themselves by associating with the heathen sacrifices. Pierius, who was connected with the catechetical school, was among the sufferers; and his brother, Isidorus, appears also to have met with his death. Dionysius was likewise placed in great peril. After eluding the search of Sabinus, the Roman Governor, for some days, he was at length taken, and carried to Taposiris. He then recovered his liberty, and we know nothing concerning him during the remainder of the reign of Decius; but it is most probable that he continued in concealment. The nature of the country afforded facilities of this kind. The north eastern boundary of Egypt was mountainous, and large tracts of desert extended to the neighbourhood of Alexandria. Chæremon, Bishop of Nilopolis, fled to one of these mountains; and from the fact of his being accompanied by his wife, we learn, that at that time there was no law against Bishops being married.* Several other persons sought the same hiding-place, and were carried off by the Saracens, who now begin to appear in history, and who were accustomed to set an exorbitant price upon their captives as a ransom.†

The historian Eusebius, according to the record of the Alexandrian Bishop, mentions the name of Julian, who, being severely afflicted with the gout, and not able either to walk or to stand, was arraigned at the judgment-seat, with two others, who were compelled to carry him thither.‡ One of the two immediately apostatized; but the other, named Cronion, surnamed Eunus, and the aged Julian himself, having confessed the Lord, were carried on camels throughout the whole city, afterwards scourged, and finally consumed in an immense fire, surrounded by a large crowd of spectators. But a soldier, whose name was Besas, standing near them, who had opposed the insolence of the multitude, whilst they were led away to execution, was himself assailed with their loud vociferations to have him brought before the judgment-seat; and this courageous champion of the Lord, having quitted himself manfully in the great combat for the cause of piety, was beheaded. Another, also, a Libyan by birth, named Makar, having resisted many and earnest solicitations of the Governor to renounce the faith, and remaining inflexible, was burnt alive. After these, Epimachus and Alexander, who had continued for some time in prison enduring various torments from the scraper,§ and the scourge, were consumed in a large fire.‖ With them, also, four

* The fifth of the apostolical canons recognises the marriage of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.

† Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxv.

‡ It was singularly unfeeling to compel those two men to bear their fellow-prisoner to that tribunal where they themselves were to be tried together with him. "Res est sacra miser," was the generous sentiment of a Christian philosopher; a sentiment of more worth than many entire systems of law and theology. "Grief and misery are ever held sacred." The most volatile and profligate cannot view intense misery without a feeling of hallowed respect; nor avoid reflecting with awe, that they may be themselves overtaken by similar calamities.

§ The instrument of torture was an iron scraper, calculated to wound and tear the flesh as it passed over it. Valesius calls them, "ferreos ungues."

‖ A similar expression occurs before. It is rendered, as above, by the word "fire." Valesius, who is followed by Shorting, translates "unslaked lime." But why he should understand it differently here from what he does above, we know not. These martyrs

women suffered: in the first place, Ammoniarum, who had from the first declared to the Governor, that she would never utter any of the words which he had commanded; and therefore he purposely strove by long and exquisite tortures to overcome her resolution. She nevertheless made good her promise, and was led to execution. The others were the venerable and aged Mercuria; Dionysia, who was the mother of many children, yet who loved the Lord more than them: these were slain with the sword, not having undergone the trial of torture, for the Governor was ashamed to inflict it in vain, and to be overcome of women. Another person of the name of Ammonarium, stood forth in the front of the battle, and underwent sufferings greater than they all. Heron, and Ater, and Isidorus, Egyptians; and Dioscorus, a youth of about fourteen years of age; were delivered unto judgment. At first the Magistrate attempted to deceive the youth with fair words, as if he could be easily brought over, and to force him by torture, if necessary. Dioscorus, however, was neither persuaded by words, nor compelled by violence. After scourging the rest in a brutal manner, and beholding them persevere, they were surrendered to the flames. Dioscorus was dismissed by the Judge, who could not fail to admire the wisdom of his responses to the questions which had been proposed, observing, "In respect of thy youth, I will allow thee farther space for amendment." "And now," says the relator, "this Dioscorus is among us, expecting a longer and more severe conflict." There was also another Egyptian, named Nemesion,* who, having been falsely accused of associating with thieves, had cleared himself of that accusation before the military officer of the district, and being afterwards informed against as a Christian, was brought in bonds before the Governor. That most unjust Judge, having inflicted upon him redoubled stripes and tortures, sentenced him to be burnt alive between two thieves. Closely connected with him was a party of soldiers, Ammon and Zeno, Ptolemy and Ingenes, with the aged Theophilus, who stood together near the judgment-seat. A certain person was brought to trial, charged with being a Christian, who appeared on the verge of apostatizing; but those men gnashed with their teeth, signified by their countenance, made motions with their hands, and by united and significant gestures showed the great inter-

were destroyed by the same kind of death as the preceding. If the word πυρ did not determine the signification, there might be some reason, perhaps, for this version, the word ασβεστος, having τιταρος understood. But it is surely going far out of our way to look for this meaning, when the proper one is so obviously determined by the many circumstances which here combine. It may be remarked, by the way, that the expression is, literally, "inextinguishable fire," a strong hyperbole for immense fire: therefore, the more reasonable supposition is, that an intense fire is here meant, or one constantly supplied with fresh fuel, till the body of the martyr was perfectly consumed.

* Of Nemesion, unless from this passage, we know nothing. One would have imagined that, from this sentence, no doubt could arise, whether Nemesion was accused before the Prefect as the associate of thieves, or as a Christian; and yet Dionysius of Alexandria has been quoted, with a view of placing Nemesion in a sort of middle state between thief and Christian! Dionysius evidently censures the injustice of the Prefect in endeavouring to confound Nemesion among real criminals in the mode of punishment, whom he could not on the trial. This wicked and shallow policy might have served to mislead the rabble of Alexandria; but it was not calculated to deceive philosophic and well-informed historians.

est which they took in the event. When the eyes of all were turned towards them, they, not having been seized by any, ran forward with one accord to the bar, and acknowledged themselves Christians. The Governor and his Counsellors were much afraid; * inasmuch as they who were about to receive condemnation were dauntless, their judges trembled: they went forthwith from the judgment-hall exulting in their testimony. Others, also, in great numbers,† throughout the towns and villages in Egypt, were torn in pieces by the Gentiles, of whom the Bishop of Alexandria records another instance: Ischurion, in the office of a steward, was the hired servant of a certain Magistrate, by whom he was commanded to burn incense; and when he refused to comply, and persisted in that determination, his master not only evil intreated him, but put him, with his own hands, to death, by thrusting him through with a stake. But, says Dionysius, "Wherefore should I speak of the multitude who, having wandered in deserts and mountains, were consumed through hunger, and thirst, and cold, and diseases, or by robbers and wild beasts? The brethren who survived those calamities bear witness that they were chosen ones, and that they overcame." ‡

In most of the districts there appeared glorious traits of Christian fidelity and devotion. At Carthage we read of a certain Numidicus, whom Cyprian, the Bishop, took into the presbytery, because he had so highly distinguished himself during the persecution. After encouraging many others to a martyr's death, after seeing his own wife expire on the funeral pile, he was himself half burnt, and, almost crushed with missiles, left for dead. His daughter sought the corpse of her father under the heap of stones, in order to bury him. How raptured must she have been to find some signs of life about him still, and to succeed in her dutiful attempt to revive him! A woman had been brought to the altar by her husband, and they compelled her to offer sacrifice by holding her hands; but she cried, "I did it not; you did it!" and she was accordingly condemned to banishment.§ We read of confessors of the faith at Carthage, who were in prison, and whom they had endeavoured, for eight days, to bring to recantation through heat, through hunger and thirst; but who still

* Observing the behaviour of Ammon and his companions, they dreaded a general insurrection of the legionary soldiers; an event most formidable in a province, and capable of shaking, and even of overturning, the empire. Happily for the honour of the Christian faith, there was no ground for such apprehension.

† Mr. Dodwell, a person of much learning and integrity, was alternately under the dominion of prejudice and of paradox. At one season, when the spirit of paradox had the ascendant, he wrote of the small number of martyrs in the primitive church. There are those who, without his prejudices, have vouchsafed to adopt his paradoxes. I pretend not to say, that there were legions of martyrs in the primitive ages of the church; but to affirm, on the other hand, that, in the Decian persecution, for example, there were very few martyrs, while Dionysius, an eye-witness of great authority, affirms that there were very many, appears capriciously sceptical. Indeed, it would seem, from the narrative of Dionysius, that at that time every faithful Christian, in a greater or in a less degree, partook of the common calamity. (Dalrymple.)

‡ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vi., cap. 41.

§ "Sed et mulier nomine Bona, quæ tracta est a marito ad sacrificandum, quæ conscientia non commissi, ad quia tenentis manus ejus ipsi sacrificaverunt, cœpit dicere contra: 'Non feci; vos fecistis;' sic et ipsa extorris facta est." (Cypriani Epistol. xviii. Paris, edit., p. 25.)

looked at death in the face unmoved.* Some confessors from Rome, who had endured a year's confinement, wrote to Cyprian as follows :— "What can happen to a man more glorious, and more blessed, than, amidst tortures, and even in the sight of death, to acknowledge God the Lord; and, with lacerated body, with a departing, but a free spirit, to recognise Christ the Son of God, and to become a fellow-sufferer of Christ in the name of Christ? We have not yet shed our blood; but we are ready to shed it! Pray, also, dearest Cyprian, that the Lord may daily more richly confirm and strengthen every one among us with the powers of his might; and that He, our great Leader, may at length conduct to the battle-field of the fight that is set before us, his warriors, whom he has hitherto practised and proved in the camp of a prison. May he bestow upon us those divine arms which never can be conquered!"†

The Bishops were the special objects of the Emperor's hatred, and it is probable that it was principally against them that the punishment of death was expressly directed. At the commencement of the persecution, Fabian, the Bishop of Rome, suffered martyrdom, who appears to have been well worthy of the place to which he was raised: ‡ for Cyprian, in answer to the letter wherein the Clergy of Rome gave to him an account of his death, calls him an excellent man; and adds, that the glory of his death had answered the purity, holiness, and integrity of his life. For his fidelity and uprightness of conduct, the late Emperor committed to Fabian the custody of his treasure; and it has been imagined, that when Decius ascended the throne, he found less wealth than he had been led to expect, and consequently the Bishop was called to suffer. Be that as it may, Decius, and other enemies to Christianity, thinking that the Christian flock would be far more easily dispersed, provided the shepherd were removed, caused Fabian to be martyred; but the example of his fortitude and constancy in suffering had a powerful effect on the minds of the faithful during the whole period of the persecution. He had

* "—— Qui Deo volente in carcere fame necati sunt; quorum et nos socios futuros intra dies audietis. Jam enim ex quo iterato reclusi sumus sunt dies octo in die quo tibi litteras scripsi. Nam et ante dies octo per dies quinque medios modicum panis accepimus et aquam ad mensuram." (Cypriani, Epist. xxi.)

† Cypriani Epist. xxv.)

‡ Fabian is said to have been miraculously chosen to the episcopate of Rome. It is said, "that the people and Clergy being assembled, in order to proceed to a new election, a dove, unexpectedly appearing, settled, to the great surprise of all present, on the head of Fabian, having been not so much as thought of, being but a layman, and not an inhabitant of Rome, but just then come out of the country. At this prodigy, the whole assembly cried out with one voice, 'Fabianus is our Bishop!' and, crowding around him, placed him, without further delay, on the episcopal throne. Thus Eusebius; (lib. vi., cap. 29;) and to this account is owing the modern notion, that the Pope is always chosen by the Holy Ghost. 'What happened in the election of Fabian,' says Cardinal Cusani, 'happens in the election of every Pope. It is true, we do not see the Holy Ghost with our corporeal eyes; but we may and must see him, if we are not quite blind, with those of the mind. In vain, therefore, O eminent electors, are all your intrigues: the person on whose head the heavenly dove is pleased to perch, will, in spite of them, be chosen!' We shall, however, not fail to see in the history of the Popes such monsters of iniquity elected, and that by means of such scandalous practices, that to imagine the Holy Ghost any ways concerned in the election, would be absolute blasphemy." (Bower's History of the Popes, vol. i., p. 48. 4to., London, 1750.)

been chosen to preside over the see of Rome in the year 236; Anteros, his predecessor, having been martyred under Maximinus. He is supposed to have suffered in 250; and, as he was slain in Rome, he was probably beheaded. A Christian Bishop was now a much more conspicuous object of attack than in the earlier persecutions. This was strikingly the case in the two leading churches of Rome and Carthage. Decius had been heard to say, that he would rather endure a competitor in the empire, than a Bishop of Rome; which shows his personal hatred to Christianity, and his determination to destroy it. The cause of such vindictive feelings might seem difficult to be ascertained, when we consider the extreme disparity between a Christian Bishop of those days, and the Sovereign of the Roman empire. It might be thought that the Emperor could not possibly have looked upon the Bishop with any feelings of jealousy or fear; and if he treated him with contempt, it need not have seemed surprising. We must, however, remember that the Christians were at this period very numerous in Rome. They have been estimated to have amounted to fifty thousand; all of whom were submissively obedient to one head, with a regularly organized system of government, and a large pecuniary fund collected among themselves. Associations of this kind have always been objects of suspicion to Kings and rulers; and the fact of all these people being bound together by a religion which had repeatedly been pronounced unlawful, was likely to increase the feeling of hostility which had been raised against them. If any member of the Roman church were examined before a Magistrate, he would be found to profess himself subject to the Bishop. The personal influence of this one man was probably much greater than that of the Emperor; and if the latter were aware that his authority was maintained by fear, he might naturally be jealous of one who was beloved, as well as obeyed. These considerations may furnish some explanation of the saying which is ascribed to Decius, and the history of this persecution shows that his inveterate hatred was not confined to words.*

Nothing, therefore, was wanting to let loose all the most cruel and malignant passions of the heart against the church of Christ. Every quarter of the empire presents us with its anecdotes of suffering and slaughter,—its deeds of atrocity and blood. Alexander, the venerable Bishop of Jerusalem, who had held the episcopate nearly forty years, was thrown into prison, where he died.† Origen was imprisoned, which confinement did not terminate during the life-time of the persecutor. Babylas, the Bishop of Antioch, was also incarcerated; and, like Alexander of Jerusalem, he died before he was released. The storm raged with great severity in Asia Minor, and one Bishop is mentioned, Eudæmon of Smyrna, who was frightened into a denial of the faith; but many others courageously received the martyr's crown. Two individuals are represented as having come out of Persia to Rome, towards the middle of the third century, a little

* Burton's History of the Christian Church, p. 328. Sixth edition.

† Epiphanius and Jerom mention him as a martyr: the Roman Martyrology honours his memory on March 18th.

before Decius began his reign, and when the persecution commenced, they were among the first who were seized; and, having suffered numerous torments, glorified God by their death. Many also of the Bishops, until the first fury of the persecution subsided, retired from their communities, not from cowardice, but because, as their presence inflamed the fury of the Heathen, they esteemed it their duty to secure the repose of the church by a temporary absence, as well as, by all means not inconsistent with their Christian faith and pastoral duties, to preserve their lives for the future service of their flocks. Among the number of those who retired for a season, was the Bishop Cyprian; and although he was long reproached as having done this from cowardice, yet his subsequent conduct clears him from this imputation; and the openness and the tranquillity of conscience with which he speaks of it are credible witnesses in his favour, when he writes thus to the Roman church: "Immediately on the first approach of trouble, when the people with loud outcries constantly demanded my death, I retired for a time, not so much from care for my own life, as for the public tranquillity of the brethren, that the tumult which had begun might not be further excited by my presence, which was offensive to the Heathen." Cyprian acted after the principle which he recommended in regard to all other persons also. "Therefore the Lord commanded us to yield, and fly in case of persecution: he commanded this, and practised it himself. For, as the martyr's crown comes from the grace of God, and can only be received when the proper time is come, so he denies not the faith who, still remaining true to Christ, retires occasionally; but he waits his time." * There was certainly a difference in the case of ordinary Christians, and of one who had the administration of the pastoral office on his hands, and duties to fulfil towards the souls confided to his care; but even this Cyprian neglected not: he might fairly appeal to his church, and say, that, though absent in body, he had been present with them constantly in spirit, and sought to guide them, by counsel and by deed, according to the commandments of the Lord.† The letters which Cyprian wrote from his retreat, through the means of the Clergy who travelled about, and were connected with his church, show with what right he could say this of himself; and with what anxiety he sought to preserve discipline and order in the church; and how desirous he was that the necessities of the poor, who were prevented by the persecution from plying their customary employments, should be attended to, and that the prisoners should be relieved by all possible means. The same principles of Christian resolution which moved him to yield to the momentary danger, were shown in his exhortations to his church, when, exhorting them to Christian steadfastness, he endeavoured to warn them against all enthusiastic and exaggerated feelings. He thus writes to his Clergy: "I pray you not to allow your prudence and care for the maintenance of tranquillity to fail; for although the brethren, in the spirit of love and charity, are desirous to visit those glorious confessors of the faith, whom the grace of God has rendered illustrious by such a glorious beginning, yet this

* Cypriani Opera, Liber de Lapsis, lib. ii. † Idem, Epist. xiv.

must be done with precaution, and not in great numbers at a time, lest we provoke the jealousy of the Heathen, and all access be forbidden; and so, while we seek for much, we lose everything. Take care, also, that due moderation be kept here for greater security, so that the individual Priests who go to administer the communion to the confessors, and the Deacons who accompany them, may change, after some regular succession, because a change of persons, and a change in those who visit the confessors, will excite less jealousy; and in everything we must gently and humbly, as becomes the servants of God, humour the times, and provide for the safety and tranquillity of the church." Cyprian also desires his flock to consider this persecution as an exhortation to prayer: "Let each of us pray to God, not only for himself, but for all the brethren, as the Lord taught us to pray; who does not command each individual to pray for himself alone, but all generally for all. When the Lord shall see that we are humble and peaceable, united among ourselves, and rendered better by these present afflictions, then will he free us from the sufferings of the enemy." *

The persecution continued to rage with unremitting violence: in the mean while, Cyprian was never more active than in his retreat. His counsels were of the greatest service both in Italy and in Africa. The Presbyters of Carthage sent Clementius, a Sub-Deacon, to Rome, from whom the Clergy in that city were informed of the retreat of Cyprian. They, in return, express to the Africans their perfect agreement in opinion concerning the fact, because he was an eminent character, and his life extremely valuable to the church. Somewhat of the spirit of a primitive Pastor is exhibited in the following letter of the exile to his Clergy. He says, "Being hitherto preserved by the favour of God, I salute you, dearest brethren, rejoicing to hear of your safety. As present circumstances permit not my residence among you, I beg you, by your faith, and by the ties of religion, to discharge your office, in conjunction with mine also, that nothing be deficient either on the head of discipline or diligence. I beg that nothing may be wanting to supply the necessities of those who are imprisoned because of their glorious confession of God, or who labour under the pressure of indigence and poverty; since the whole ecclesiastical fund is in the hands of the Clergy for this very purpose, that a number may have it in their power to relieve the wants of individuals."

Among those who sought safety by exiling themselves from their country, was a young man of Thebais, in Egypt. He was an orphan, but inherited from his parents a very considerable fortune; and his learning and piety were equal to the advantages he inherited by birth. This extraordinary man has had his Life written by Jerome. Unhappily he was exposed to the envy of his sister's husband, with whom he resided; and, at the breaking out of the persecution in Egypt, his infamous relative conceived the idea of securing his destruction by informing against him as a Christian. But Paul obtained notice of the snare laid for him, and lost no time in making his

* Cypriani Opera, Epist. vii., ad Clerum.

escape from the house. Not knowing on whom he could depend for shelter in that "reign of terror," he took up his abode for a short time in a lonely country house, and from thence directed his steps towards the mountains which bordered on the desert. There finding a cave, which promised him both shelter and security from his enemies, he took possession of it, with the intention of remaining there until the persecution should cease, when he might return to the enjoyment of his fortune with safety. But, being naturally of a tranquil and contemplative disposition, the silence of the desert, the freedom it afforded from care, and uninterrupted opportunities of thought and devotion which might be there enjoyed, made him every day more attached to his cave; and, by the time the persecution terminated, he had become so enamoured of a solitary life, that he gave up all idea of returning to the world; and for no less than ninety years continued to inhabit the mountains, forgotten by his race, but enjoying a peace for which he paid a price far below its value, if we simply consider the sacrifice of his fortune. This is said to be the first instance of a Christian devoting himself to a life of perfect seclusion from the world; and Paul may therefore be looked upon as the father of that extraordinary race of men who, in a subsequent age, astonished the world by their solitary and austere lives.* There is every reason to believe that a system of monachism had existed in Egypt from an early period. The Therapeutæ, described by Philo, were a species of Monks; and the persecutions which occurred so frequently in the latter half of the third century, drove great numbers of Christians to embrace a solitary life. Beside which, it must be mentioned, that the writers of the Alexandrian school had for a long time been preparing the way for that ascetic and contemplative mode of life which was now beginning to be so highly prized among Christians. The works of Clement, and still more those of Origen, are filled with passages which countenance such a system; and the later Platonists, who studied in the same school, not only impressed these principles upon their disci-

* Ascetics were such as inured themselves to greater degrees of abstinence and fasting than other men; as those mentioned by Origen, who abstained from flesh and living creatures, in order to mortify and subdue their passions. Such abstinence the apostolical canons call ἄσκησις, the exercise of an ascetic life. So that all who abstained from flesh, on account of mortification, not out of an opinion of its uncleanness, as some heretics did, were called "ascetics." The same appellation was given to those who were more than ordinarily intent on the exercises of prayer and devotion. Accordingly Cyril of Jerusalem calls the Prophetess Anna, who departed not from the temple, but served God night and day, "the most religious ascetic." In short, every kind of uncommon piety and virtue laid claim to the name. Whence it appears, that the ascetics were not originally the same with Monks, as Baronius, and the generality of the Romish writers, pretend they were. Ascetics had been long in the church; but the monastic life was not known till towards the fourth century. The difference between ascetics and Monks is this:—1. The Monks were men who retired from the business and conversation of the world to some distant mountain, or desert wilderness; but the first ascetics were men of an active life, living in cities as other men, and differing from them only in the heights to which they carried their virtue. 2. The Monks were to be only laymen; but the ascetics were indifferently of any order. 3. The Monks were tied up to certain rules and laws of discipline; but the ancient ascetics were governed by no laws but those of the Gospel. In short, though every Monk is an ascetic, every ascetic is not a Monk; the former appellation being of a more general import than the latter. (Henderson.)

ples, but referred to Pythagoras, and other ancient philosophers, as having led a life of abstinence.*

A number of individuals continued to attest the verity of the Gospel by the shedding of blood. A great multitude fled from their homes. Many were attacked on the road by robbers, who pillaged and murdered them; and others perished of cold and hunger, as they endeavoured to drag their exhausted frames to some place of shelter. But one of the most extraordinary personages mentioned in the Decian persecution was Agatha, a Sicilian lady, of noble extraction, who was as accomplished in mind and person, as she was eminent for the graces of Christianity. Her beauty attracted the attention of Quintien, the Governor of the province; and his passion being still more inflamed by the gentleness of her demeanour, he assailed her with all the arts of a seducer. Indignant at his attempts, Agatha fled with precipitation to the town of Catana; but Quintien, not to be thus thwarted in his designs, ordered her to be pursued, and brought back by force. Thus in his power, she was committed to the care of a woman, whom he directed to employ every means for corrupting her mind; and with this infamous pander to her persecutor's will, was the pure-hearted and noble girl obliged to remain a whole month; at the end of which time her keeper confessed, that all her efforts to subdue the austerity of her charge had failed. Quintien, however, possessed a fit character for a persecutor. Notwithstanding his admiration of Agatha's beauty, and the feminine charms of her character and disposition, he gave way to the most violent passion on hearing that she continued firmly opposed both to his addresses and to every proposition, compliance with which might be an offence against her religious profession. Determined on revenge, he summoned her before his tribunal, and demanded a confession of her faith. Her answers were direct and explicit. She declared that she was a Christian, and that she held in abhorrence the deities whom the Pagans worshipped. As he had now an apparently legal motive for punishing the unfortunate girl, he ordered her to be conducted to prison; and the next day, after repeating the mockery of an examination, committed her to the torture, and endured to see the delicate frame of the woman for whom he had expressed the most unbounded love, torn with the scourge, and scorched with burning irons. At the end he directed the nipples of her breasts to be cut off, and in that condition sent back to prison. Agatha had borne her sufferings with the firmness which she evinced in her former conduct towards the tyrant; and though he directed that no care should be taken of her wounds, nor any nourishment afforded her, she was in a few days sufficiently recovered to be again dragged before the tribunal, and compelled to answer the interrogatories of Quintien. But not a single contradiction of the sentiments she had originally uttered could be elicited from her lips; and, unmoved either by pity for the sufferings she had undergone with so much magnanimity, or by any admiration of her virtue and resignation, the barbarian directed his attendants to renew her tortures by

* Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 106; Burton, Lectures on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxv.

placing her on the sharp points of a machine, exposed to burning charcoal. Even this she endured without flinching; and, on being replaced in her cell, calmly resigned her spirit unto God.*

The Decian persecution, though it made many martyrs and confessors, had also caused great numbers to comply with the imperial edict by offering sacrifices. These lapsed Christians, as they were called, were very numerous at Carthage; but many, perhaps most of them, retained their belief in Christ, though their courage had given way when their lives were in danger. There were others who had allowed their names to be added to the list of those who had offered sacrifice, though they had not themselves actually done so. The Magistrates were perhaps satisfied if they could make this list appear large; the triumph of Heathenism over Christianity was acknowledged; and they gave to those persons a written document, in which they were named as having offered sacrifice, and which saved them from further molestation.† All the persecutions sustained by the Christians in preceding times, taken together, did not produce so great a number of deserters and apostates from the truth, as this short one under Decius. Persons of all ranks, and, what is particularly to be wondered at, even Bishops and Priests, scarcely waited to be informed of the tyrant's threats, before they hastened away to the tribunals of the Presidents and Magistrates, and professed themselves ready to abjure Christianity, and join in the worship of the heathen deities. This fearful evil is probably attributable to the soft, dissolute, and degenerate course of life into which many called Christians had fallen, in consequence of the long-continued season of tranquillity which they had enjoyed of late years. No longer beset by cares and solicitude, the Christians had relaxed much in their professed contempt of life and its concerns, and were generally familiar with vicious habits. Cyprian acknowledges this; and his testimony is of importance. In the estimation of others, another circumstance may be considered as conducive to the effect of this Decian persecution. Trajan, by his rescript, merely punished with death those who refused to abandon the faith of Christ,—not a word was uttered respecting torture; and of the same complexion were all the edicts that had been issued by his successors against the Christian. But the terrors of Decius were not confined to capital punishments. By him the despisers of the pagan deities were threatened with tortures of the most excruciating character, and with all the horrors of a lingering and painful death. In the execution of these threats, the Presidents manifested the most scrupulous zeal; not commanding any one to be put to death without previously worrying and exhausting him in a thousand horrible ways. To such an extent was this system of torture carried, that many of the victims actually expired under the hands of the tormentors. In order to instil greater terror, some of the Presidents exercised their ingenuity in the invention of new modes of anguish, of which they were accustomed to make a public display. All these circumstances were calculated to produce a far greater degree

* Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 108.
† Burton, Lectures on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxv.

of dejection and dismay, than the punishments of former times. Those for whom death itself has no terrors, are liable to have their fears excited by the prospect of severe torture and laceration; increased, as they confessedly were, by the numerous examples of inhumanity and cruelty constantly exhibited. The *Lapsed*, or those who fell from their steadfastness during this short but terrific persecution, were considered of three classes; the *Thurificati*, the *Sacrificati*, and the *Libellatici*, including those who presented frankincense before the statues of the heathen deities, or Emperor, or victims and sacrifices, and those who had received documents from the hands of the Magistrate, testifying that the requirements of the Emperor had been met, and that they were secure from all future molestation. Much difference of opinion upon this class of people has been manifested. With regard, however, to the following particulars, the question does not admit of a doubt; namely, that the title *Libellaticus* was derived from *libellus*, the libel, or certificate, which those termed *Libellatici* either presented to the Judge, or else received from him; and that these *Libellatici* had redeemed their lives, and secured themselves against the Emperor's edict, by means of money, which does not appear to have been a new thing, nor accounted as disgraceful or unwarrantable. By the disciples of Montanus it was considered impious to purchase life and safety with money; but this opinion was peculiar to the Montanists, and condemned by the Christians generally. It is also certain, that the *Libellatici* were not chargeable with actual apostacy, or defection from Christ, either in word or deed; that is, they never paid any sort of worship or honour to the heathen deities, nor did they either conceal or dissemble their religion: they were, however, guilty of what had a near affinity to this crime, and might, upon a more diligent examination, admit of being regarded as a tacit proof of their having renounced Christ. It is also certain, that the *Libellatici* were considered the least criminal among the defaulters; and, on that account, were allowed to make their peace with the church on comparatively easy terms. The chief points of controversy are the following, Whether it was from certificates they delivered, or from certificates they received, that the *Libellatici* received their name; and what were the contents of those documents? The answer turns wholly on the interpretation of certain passages in the writings of Cyprian, who is the only author who makes mention of this class of individuals. Avarice universally prevailed; and there is no country where life is not preferred to money. The Christian, therefore, to whom the title of *Libellaticus* was applied, was one who, upon paying a sum of money to the Magistrate, had obtained from him *libellus securitatis*, a certificate of security, in which it was stated that such a person had complied with the Emperor's edict, that is, had sacrificed to the gods, although, in point of fact, he had done nothing of the kind, but had, on the contrary, intimated to the Judge, that it was a thing which he could not do. On account of this certificate, which, if necessity required, the person holding it produced, he was publicly regarded as one who had renounced his religion, although, in reality, his adherence to it remained unshaken.

The Judge practised an imposition in granting this certificate: the Christian was guilty of similar deceit in availing himself of it, and felt no compunction in suffering himself to be viewed by the thoughtless world around him, as an apostate and a "cast-away." Herein consisted the true and proper crime of the *Libellatici;* for, notwithstanding this tacit acknowledgment of their having repudiated Christianity was altogether an imposition, it seemed to differ but in a very trifling degree from a genuine and undisguised profession of apostacy.

From the language of Cyprian we do not fail to gather the following:—That the *Libellatici* had not paid any sort of worship to the heathen deities; they had not even in any way participated of the meats offered to gods, and were consequently far more innocent than the *Sacrificati.* That their motive in procuring for themselves certificates, was an apprehension that, if called before the Magistrates, they might, through fear of torture, be induced to defile themselves by an idolatrous offering. That it was not of their own accord, but at the instigation of others, that they made application to the Magistrates for certificates; or, as Cyprian expresses it, an opportunity was freely offered by which they might obtain one with facility, without having so much as employed a thought on the subject. Avaricious Magistrates, for instance, if they were apprized of any one amongst the Christians who was favoured with prosperity and wealth, took care to have it privately intimated, either by confidential messengers, or through the channel of friends, that they were desirous of manifesting their clemency towards him, and that, by paying down a moderate sum of money, he might redeem himself, and secure his future safety. That they did not present written petitions to the Magistrate, but applied to him either personally or by their friends; and after acquainting him, by word of mouth, with the nature of their request, made him an offer of reward adequate to the protection solicited. Cyprian mentions the terms in which applications of this kind were couched. It was requisite, also, for the safety of the Presidents, that the affair should be transacted in this way. Had petitions in writing been brought forward and presented by those who sought protection without sacrificing, these very certificates might have led to the easy detection of the fraud. Those who are at all conversant with human affairs know well, that things of this sort, tending to diminish the authority of the laws, and to counteract the will of the ruling powers, are not customarily committed to writing, but carried into execution by word of mouth. "A circumstance that makes me," says Dr. Mosheim, "wonder at those who conceive that the *Libellatici* took their designation from the *libelli,* or petitions, presented by them to the Judge, is, that a few of the accused or suspected individuals made application to the Judge in person, but that others made known their request through the medium of friends. Some, doubtless, would imagine that their transgression would be less criminal if, instead of endeavouring to corrupt the Magistrate themselves, they made use of the instrumentality of others. Probably a few might not be without apprehension, that if they per-

sonally presented themselves before the Judge, he would at once cause them to be seized, and thrown into prison; they therefore preferred having recourse to a heathen worshipper, for whom no fears need be entertained, and commissioning him to make the necessary application to the Magistrate, and paying down the stipulated price; and it is also clear, that the *Libellatici* received a certificate from the Magistrate whom they bribed, a fact which is expressly adverted to by Cyprian in more instances than one: by the same document, also, they obtained security against any efforts that might be made to impeach them, or to compel them to join in the heathen sacrifices." *

The morality of the persons who thus truckled to existing circumstances, and basely denied the faith, cannot be too severely reprehended. What was recorded in the certificate thus solicited or procured, is sufficiently indicated in the following words:—"Cujus consensa, licet non a se admissum crimen, publice legitur." The individual, therefore, who solicited the certificate, consented that a crime which he had never committed should be publicly imputed to him. This crime, beyond all question, was that of sacrifice; and in these papers it was recorded, that the persons holding them had sacrificed to the heathen deities. The President, therefore, testified in his certificate, that Caius or Seius, as the case might be, had complied with, and satisfied, the Emperor's edict; and he who had solicited and procured such certificate, gave his consent that this should be recorded respecting him, although, in point of fact, it was an absolute falsehood. The words, *publice legitur*, may perhaps lead to the further conjecture, that the certificates thus granted were publicly exhibited in the prætorium.

Great numbers of these defaulters, particularly in Egypt and Africa, with a view to obtain for themselves a more ready reconciliation with their respective Bishops and churches, procured from certain of those who were honoured with the title of martyrs to come forward as intercessors on their behalf. An almost incredible degree of importance and authority was attached by the early Christians to the character both of martyrs and confessors; so that, whatever they might declare to be their desire was considered almost as the will of heaven. It had become customary, even in the previous century, to receive again into communion all such of the lapsed as were able to procure a testimonial of fraternal love from a martyr, without exacting from them anything beyond a few ordinary proofs of a repentant and contrite spirit. Testimonials of this description from a martyr, declaring that he had consented to overlook the delinquency of such individuals, were usually denominated *libelli pacis*, or certificates of pardon and peace. In the persecution of which we are now speaking, certain of the martyrs of Africa appear to have extremely abused the privilege with which they were thus invested; and either out of veneration for the character of a martyr, or from fear, or from ignorance of the law, some of the Bishops and Presbyters conducted themselves with a greater degree of lenity than was proper towards all such of the lapsed as came to them provided with certificates

* Mosheim's Commentaries, vol. iii., p. 60, cent. iii.

of the above description; the evil of which was faithfully pointed out by Cyprian, who strongly recommended that lenity should be tempered with a just measure of severity, and that the liberty of granting certificates of peace should be confined within proper limits.

This custom, however, was liable to much abuse. Under the denomination of martyrs were included not only those on whom sentence of death had actually been passed, but also those who, after having bravely encountered the most grievous sufferings in the cause of Christ, were still detained in prison, uncertain of the fate that awaited them. Of the right of these martyrs to grant certificates of pardon and peace to such as might petition for them, not the least question was entertained; neither did any one ever deny, or pretend to deny, that a penance merely of the shorter or more trivial kind was to be imposed on such as should produce to the Bishop certificates of this description. Had any one committed himself so far as to make a question of either of those points, he would have drawn upon himself the accusation of having violated the sanctity and dignity of the martyrs, and of having committed high treason against the majesty of God, who, it was generally believed, spoke and determined through the mouth of these his faithful adherents. It was, therefore, merely respecting the manner in which this privilege of granting certificates should be exercised, and the degree of influence which such documents should be allowed to possess, that any question was raised. These letters of peace did not owe their origin to any particular law or canon, but to custom: a degree of uncertainty therefore prevailed with regard to the extent to which the right of granting them ought to reach; and this uncertainty occasioned many things to be done by the martyrs in the course of the persecution under Decius which were highly detrimental to the welfare of the church, and which were made the subject of severe reprehension by Cyprian and other Prelates. In the first place, they disregarded the ancient practice of granting certificates of this description only to a few, and not even to these without a diligent examination of the case of each individual; the martyrs were accustomed to distribute them, without the least reserve or discrimination, to applicants of every description: hence the Bishops were overwhelmed with a flood of certificates of reconciliation, many of which were of a very dubious character. Several passages are to be met with in Cyprian, in which he mentions the incredible number of the certificates of peace that were granted by the martyrs. The fact was, that not doubting but that they should be able to obtain such papers, great multitudes hastened away to the heathen tribunals, and, publicly renouncing Christ, offered sacrifice; and then, as if they had been guilty of nothing wherewith they might reproach themselves, they impudently and with boldness went to the prisons where the more constant of the Christians were courageously awaiting their final sentence, and solicited their mediation, which being readily obtained, they immediately presented themselves before their respective Bishops, and preferred a claim to reconciliation with the church, inasmuch as they had again been recognised as brethren by the martyrs, whose certificates they produced. In the persecutions of pre-

ceding times, this prejudicial course of conduct, into which inexperienced and illiterate martyrs might easily be betrayed, had, by the prudence of the Bishops, been effectually provided against. Deacons of a provident, circumspect character, and well versed in the principles of the Christian religion, were sent by them to the different prisons, for the purpose of furnishing the martyrs with proper advice, and taking care that certificates of peace should not be granted indiscriminately, but merely to such as could make it appear that they were not undeserving of the boon.

Some of the martyrs, previously to their yielding up their lives in the cause of their divine Master, commissioned certain of their friends to grant, in their name, certificates of reconciliation to all without distinction, who, after their departure, should make application for them. An example of this occurs in the epistle of Lucian the Confessor to Celerinus.* Cyprian represents Lucian as a pious man, but not deeply versed in matters pertaining to religion. It appears that he had granted many certificates on behalf of another martyr, of the name of Aurelius, who was not able to write. Cyprian with great vigour opposed these corruptions; and Lucian, who was irritated at the treatment he received, burst through every restraint of modesty, and, causing other confessors to associate with him in a league of contumacious audacity, sent forth, in the name of himself and others, one general certificate of pardon and peace, proclaiming it to be their will, that all the lapsed, without exception, should be received again into the bosom of the church. The improper conduct of these martyrs, who were, for the most part, illiterate men, altogether unacquainted with Christian discipline, might possibly have been counteracted and checked, had the Presbyters and Bishops acted conformably to the duties of their station. But, instead of this, and instigated, as it should seem, by a hatred of Cyprian, and other base motives, they shamefully contributed to the augmentation of the evil, and voluntarily carried their concessions to an extent beyond what even the martyrs had asked. Though much latitudinarianism had been manifested, it does not appear to have been the wish of the martyrs generally to overthrow all order, or to break in upon the authority of the Bishops; nor was it their object to exempt those they received into their favour from all kinds of punishment and penance. This, for a while, involved Cyprian in a harsh and vexatious controversy with the martyrs, the confessors, the Presbyters, the lapsed, and the people: in the end, however, the justness of his principles was fully recognised, and he may be said to have left the field triumphant.†

The defection of so many deeply wounded the charitable and fervent spirit of Cyprian. "I could have wished, dearest brethren," said he, "to have had it in my power to salute your whole body sound and entire; but, as the melancholy tempest has, in addition to the fall of so many of the people, also affected the Clergy, sad accumulation of our sorrow! we pray the Lord, that, by divine mercy, we may be enabled to salute you, at least, whom we have

* Cypriani Opera, Epist. xxi.

† Mosheim's Commentaries, vol. iii., p. 77.

known to stand firm in faith and virtue, safe for the time to come. And though the cause loudly called on me to hasten my return to you,—first, on account of my own desire and regret for the loss of your company, a desire which burns strongly within me; in the next place, that we might in full council settle the various questions in the church which require attention; yet, on the whole, to remain still concealed, seemed more advisable on account of other advantages which pertain to the general safety; an account of which our dear brother Tertullus will give you, who, agreeably to that care which he employs in divine works with so much zeal, was also the adviser of this counsel, that I should act with caution and moderation, and not rashly commit myself to the public view in a place where I had so often been sought and called for."* In another epistle he refers to the practical corruptions of the church which were rife during his retreat: "And what plagues, what stripes, do we not deserve, since even confessors, who ought to be patterns to the rest, are quite disorderly! Hence while the tumid and indecent pride of their confession puffs up some, torments have come, and torments unremitted, tedious, and most distressing, even to death itself."†

With regard to the *libelli pacis* which the martyrs and confessors had granted, Cyprian, in an epistle to the laity, says, "I know from myself that you groan over, and grieve for, the ruins of our people, dearest brethren, as I groan over and grieve with you for each of them; and feel what the blessed Apostle said, 'Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?' and again, 'If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.' I sympathize and condole with our brethren who, lapsing through the violence of persecution, draw with them part of ourselves, and by their wounds have brought acute pain upon us. Divine grace is indeed able to heal them; yet, I think, we ought not to be in a hurry, nor do anything incautiously and with precipitation, lest we rashly admit them into communion, and the displeasure of the Most High be more severely incurred. The blessed martyrs have written to us, entreating that their desires may be examined when, the Lord vouchsafing us peace, we return to the church: then everything shall be examined in your presence, with concurrence of your judgments. Yet, I hear that some Presbyters, neither mindful of the Gospel, nor considering what the martyrs have written to us, and in contempt of the episcopal authority, have already begun to communicate with the lapsed, and to administer the Lord's supper to them, in defiance of that legitimate order by which alone they should be admitted. For if in lesser faults this be observed, much more in evils like these which radically affect Christian profession itself. Our Presbyters and Deacons ought to admonish them of this, that they may cherish the sheep entrusted to them, and instruct them in the way of salvation by divine rules. I have too good an opinion of the peaceable and humble disposition of our people to believe that they would have ventured to take such a step, had they not been seduced by the adulatory arts of some of the Clergy. Do you, then, take care of each of them, and by your

* Cypriani Opera, Epist. v. † Ibid., Epist. viii.

judgment and moderation, according to the divine precepts, moderate the spirits of the lapsed: let none pluck off fruit as yet unripe with improvident hastiness; let none commit a vessel again to the deep shattered already and leaky, till it be carefully refitted; let none put on his tattered garment, till he see it thoroughly repaired. I beseech them to attend to our counsel, and expect our return; that when we shall come to you, by the mercy of God, we may examine the letters and the desires of the martyrs in the presence of the confessors, according to the will of the Lord, and with the concurrence of other Bishops convened together." *

The epistles which Cyprian had forwarded to his own Clergy were transmitted to Rome, where a similar difficulty had occurred on account of the vacancy of that see. The Roman Clergy entirely approved of what Cyprian had done; and, having met together, though they had no spiritual head, they decided that the lapsed, when on the point of death, might be admitted to communion. They communicated their decision to several other churches, as well as to Carthage; and it is worthy of remark, that the persecution did not hinder the Christians in different countries from keeping up a close correspondence with each other, and that they manifested an earnest desire to act in concert. It is also a singular circumstance, that at the time when an infallible head of the church would have been particularly needed for the settling of a question which was in some measure new, the church of Rome was without a Bishop. The Roman Clergy showed great anxiety upon the subject, and exchanged several letters with the Bishop and Clergy of Carthage; but they assumed to themselves no kind of superiority; and though Cyprian was glad to have their concurrence and support, he writes as an equal, and as one who in his own diocese was perfectly independent.†

The controversy respecting the lapsed was accompanied by another of somewhat less importance, if considered merely in itself; but if we regard its rise and origin, it will be found attended with momentous and formidable circumstances, inasmuch as it had its source in hatred, and an unrestrained indulgence of malevolent passions; it was protracted to a considerable length, and carried on with a degree of warmth and pertinacity, beyond what the nature of the affair might have justified, and it produced in the end a deplorable schism. The leading facts of the case are as follows:—Novatus, a Presbyter of the church of Carthage, had, before the breaking out of the Decian persecution, on some account or other, not now to be ascertained, fallen out with his Bishop, Cyprian, and drawn away after him certain of his fellow-Presbyters; that is, he had prevailed on them to refuse conforming in all things to episcopal authority. Novatus is represented on the page of ecclesiastical history to have been a man not only of an arrogant, factious, rash, and inconstant character, but one who had polluted himself by the commission of numerous crimes. Cyprian had intended to proceed against him before the proper authorities, and to eject him from the communion of the faithful, and a day

* Cypriani Opera, Epist. xi., ad Plebem.
† Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxv.

had been assigned for this purpose; but the sudden promulgation of the Decian edict compelled Cyprian to fly, consequently Novatus escaped the contemplated punishment. After the departure of Cyprian nothing more was heard of this disturbance so long as the Magistrates of Africa continued to vex the church; but when the violence of the persecution had subsided, and Cyprian contemplated his return to Carthage, Novatus fomented a faction, which for a season prevented his re-appearance in that city. This happened a short time before Easter, and the authors of the schism were Novatus, and four other Presbyters, who had already opposed his authority, and a layman named Felicissimus, who shortly after received ordination from the former. Another instigator of the schism was Fortunatus; and these men, though they were at first few in number, laid the foundation of a division which lasted for centuries. Some seceders, who took up their residence in the mountains, were called, from that circumstance, "Montenses;" and the Donatists, who rose into notice in the following century, may be traced to the same turbulent and discontented source.* Such distractions and turbulent proceedings had the effect of prolonging the absence of the Bishop from Carthage, but could not ultimately prevent his return. Novatus, however, apprehensive of the severity of Cyprian, withdrew himself, before the return of the latter, to Rome, in which city there prevailed no less strife and division than at Carthage.

At the termination of the paschal festival, Cyprian returned to Carthage, having been separated from his Clergy about one year and four months. His first step was to convene a council for deciding the case of the lapsed; and before it was gathered together, he wrote a work upon the subject, entitled *De Lapsis*, which is still extant. The assembly was composed of several Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons; and inasmuch as all the lapsed were not equally guilty, a suitable distinction was made in the sentence. Those who had actually offered sacrifice had a penitential course of discipline imposed upon them for a definite time; but the *libellatici*, having already repented, were at once restored to communion. Felicissimus and his associates appeared before the council, and were excommunicated. In the mean while the see of Rome, which had been vacant above twelve months, was filled up by the election of Cornelius. We learn that sixteen Bishops were present when he was chosen, and that he had the almost unanimous voice of the Clergy and people. One of his own letters is also extant, which gives an interesting account of the ecclesiastical establishment, as it existed at Rome at this period. There were forty-six Presbyters; from which it has been inferred, that there were as many churches, and we may at least conclude that there were as many distinct congregations. The Deacons were only seven, the number having, perhaps, been continued from the apostolical times; but there were also seven Sub-Deacons, and forty-two assistants. The exorcists, readers, and door-keepers amounted to fifty-two; and the number of widows, and other poor persons who were maintained by public charity, was above one hun-

* Burton's Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxv.

dred and fifty. This statement leaves no room to doubt, that the Christians of Rome were very numerous, and that collections were still made for the poorer brethren.*

Cornelius did not find the see of Rome a luxurious and easy position. A Presbyter of the church in that city, named Novatian,† was equally factious with Novatus, and was enabled to acquire still greater celebrity. He commenced by opposing the election of Cornelius, and setting himself up as a rival Bishop, having persuaded three other Prelates, who were simple, uneducated men, to come from a remote part of Italy, and assist in his consecration. That there should at one time be two Bishops of the same see, was a thing perfectly unprecedented; the only exception having occurred at the beginning of the century, when Alexander was appointed as a coadjutor to Narcissus, in the bishopric of Jerusalem. In this case, however, the great age of Narcissus rendered him incapable of discharging his duties; and there is every reason to suppose that he perfectly agreed with the other members of his church in wishing to have an assistant appointed. The decision was novel, but it was made unanimously, and to the great benefit of the church: whereas, in the case of Cornelius and Novatian, there was no doubt whatever that the former was properly elected; and that the latter set himself up as a rival, with the support of a trifling minority. It was, however, very desirable that the schism should not spread; and Cornelius, as well as his Clergy, was anxious that his election should be made known at Carthage. Cyprian also took pains to inquire into the case, and soon convinced himself that Cornelius was the lawful Bishop. The next step of the Bishop of Rome was to assemble a council, in which the proceedings of Novatian were condemned, and the decision of the Synod of Carthage concerning the lapsed was adopted, with the additional provision, that Bishops, or Clergymen, if they had lapsed, should only be re-admitted to communion as laymen, and should no longer exercise their spiritual functions. Copies of this decision were sent to distant churches; and Cyprian showed the same wish to produce uniformity by announcing the election of Cornelius to all the African churches, and by publishing a treatise on the unity of the church.‡

During the proceedings which are thus briefly adverted to, "the

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vi., cap. 43; Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxv. Gibbon estimates the number of Christians in Rome at this period at fifty thousand.

† "Novatian, from similarity of name, as well as from principles, has sometimes been confounded with Novatus. There can, however, be no doubt, that they were two different persons; one of them a Presbyter of Carthage, and the other of Rome. Novatian was a man of learning, and had taken part in the correspondence which passed in the preceding year between the Roman Clergy and Cyprian. He is also supposed to have been the author of a treatise on the Trinity, which has come down to us, and which does not bear the marks of any heretical sentiments. His behaviour, at the end of the Decian persecution, was flagrantly irregular, and led the way to most disastrous circumstances. His conduct had been suspected before the election of Cornelius; and the Presbyters who had been lying in prison since the death of Fabian, pronounced him excommunicated, as well as five other Presbyters who were attached to him. Matters were in this state, when Novatus came from Carthage to Rome, and he easily persuaded Novatian to commence a schism." (Burton.)

‡ Burton, Eccles. Hist., p. 336. Sixth edition.

noble army of martyrs" was abundantly enlarged. Subsequent to the martyrdom of Fabian, and previous to the election of Cornelius to the episcopate, Moyses was beheld as the chief ornament of the Roman Clergy, nor were Maximus and others considered inferior to him; both were Priests, and did honour to that character by the sanctity of their lives, and their zeal for the glory of Christ and the salvation of man. The persecution furnished a favourable opportunity for the manifestation of their fidelity; on account of which, with others, they were seized and imprisoned. With considerable courage they sustained the first assaults of the enemy; and their behaviour under suffering strengthened the Christians in their faith, and inspired them with hallowed resolutions to suffer for Christ. They were for some time confined without enduring further punishment than the loss of liberty inseparable from a prison. At length they were more hardly used, and exposed to numerous trials, and a variety of torments. Several proposals were then made for their enlargement; but as a compliance with the pagan worship was always included among them, they refused to purchase their liberty at the expense of their faith. This liberty, however, was at length obtained; and Maximus, with some others, fell into the snares of Novatus, and were decoyed into schism. Moyses stood his ground, and was proof against all solicitation, exerting himself for the welfare of the church: he declared that he would not hold communion with the schismatic, or any of his adherents, and was active in discovering and defeating his wiles. It was, however, not long before Moyses was again seized, and, with exemplary courage and fortitude, suffered martyrdom, being beheaded within the walls of Rome.

All that is known of Julian, who suffered during this persecution, is from Chrysostom, who informs us that he was born in Cilicia. The Decian edict for the persecution of the Christians furnished him with an opportunity of maintaining the faith at the cost of ease, liberty, and life. He fell into the hands of a Magistrate, who abused his commission in the infliction of most inhuman cruelties: his constancy was severely tried. The civic officer, finding that violence had not the desired effect, determined to try his patience; and, therefore, he was immured for a length of time in prison. From his murky dungeon he was frequently carried before his relentless Judge, by whom he was barbarously used, and remanded to prison: sometimes these severities were remitted, and milder measures were adopted. For a whole year Julian was wantonly compelled to travel from town to town, that he might be exposed to the insult and contumely of the Pagan; but he was invincible; the malice of his adversaries only rendered him a more conspicuous witness of the truth, inasmuch as nothing could make him ashamed or weary of his profession. Finding that all their efforts were ineffectual, and that what was designed for the confusion of the confessor, terminated in the glory of God and the honour of his servant, he was re-conducted to the Magistrate, who, being exasperated, ordered him to be stripped, and scourged until his bones appeared, employing various tortures that might shake the constancy of any who preferred life and ease to the

serenity of mind which a good conscience only can vouchsafe. Julian overcame. The Judge, still more incensed at finding his attempts abortive, resolved to despatch him, and thus rid himself of further trouble and confusion; he nevertheless commanded him to be executed in a manner which gave some hopes that Julian might, after all, lose his confidence and patience, and forfeit the reward of his former sufferings. He was confined in a leathern bag, into which a number of serpents and scorpions were put, and then thrown into the sea.

Pursuant to the Decian edict, Peter, a young man valuable for the excellencies of his mind, was arrested at Lampsachus, a town on the Hellespont, and carried before Optimus, the Proconsul of Asia. Having answered the usual interrogatories, and confessed himself a Christian, the Proconsul required him to notice the imperial command, and comply therewith by offering sacrifice to Venus. Peter, with promptitude, replied, "I am surprised that you should endeavour to persuade me to sacrifice to an infamous woman, whose licentiousness is recorded by your own historians, and whose life consisted of such actions as the laws would severely punish. No; I ought much rather to offer to the true God and Jesus Christ the acceptable sacrifice of prayer and praise." On hearing this, Optimus ordered him to be stretched on a wheel, and bound down to it with chains; which was done with such violence, that his bones were broken. His torments seemed to inspire him with fresh courage; and in the midst thereof he smiled on his persecutors, as if he designed to reproach them with the impotency of their malice to separate him from God. Then looking up to heaven, he thanked the Almighty for enabling him hitherto to endure the trial, and earnestly requested a continuance of the requisite courage and patience to overcome the tyranny of his enemies. The Proconsul, witnessing such undaunted perseverance and zeal, ordered him to be beheaded.

Immediately after this sanguinary scene had transpired, and as the Proconsul was setting out for Troas, a city in Phrygia, three others, namely, Andrew, Paul, and Nicomachus, were brought before him for professing Christianity. He asked whence they came, and what was their religion. Nicomachus, more zealous and impatient than the rest, cried out, that he was a Christian. Andrew and Paul, being required to give an account of themselves, said, they were of the same faith. Optimus then, turning to Nicomachus, commanded him to offer sacrifice to the heathen deities, according to the edict of the Emperor; to which he readily answered, that a Christian ought not to pay that respect to devils which was due only to God. Upon this declaration he was put upon the rack, and tortured; which he endured with laudable patience and resolution, until he seemed ready to expire, and then forfeited all the advantage of his sufferings by abjuring the faith, and offering sacrifice to the gods. The Proconsul ordered him to be immediately set at liberty; but Nicomachus had scarcely given that public proof of his apostacy, than he fell into the most violent agonies, and died on the spot. A young woman about sixteen years of age, of the name of Denisa, witnessed this terrible

judgment, and exclaimed, "O unhappy wretch! why would you purchase a moment's ease at the expense of a miserable eternity?" Optimus heard her, and calling her to him, he asked if she were a Christian; to which she replied in the affirmative, saying, "Yes, I am; and therefore pity the poor man who could not hold out one moment longer, when he knew the reward of his sufferings, and that eternal rest was before him." To which the Proconsul, alluding to the dreadful end of Nicomachus, sarcastically said, "He has truly found rest! for having discharged his duty to the gods, and to the Emperor, the great goddesses Venus and Diana have taken him out of the world, that he should not be exposed to the reproach and insult of the Christians." Having thus spoken, he commanded Denisa to offer sacrifice according to the decree of the Emperor, assuring her that if she were disobedient, she should be punished with the utmost severity. To this she replied, that the God whom she served was more powerful than he, and therefore she feared not his threats, nor would she obey his commands; upon which he delivered her into the hands of two Libertines,* who were ordered to compel her to submission: she was, however, mercifully preserved from evil. Andrew and Paul were remanded to prison.

On the following morning the populace in great crowds surrounded the Proconsul's house, demanding that Andrew and Paul should be delivered into their hands. They had been instigated to this by certain Priests of Diana. Optimus sent for the two martyrs, and ordered them to sacrifice to the goddess. They informed him, that they knew no such deity, nor had they ever rendered divine honours to any but to God alone. This declaration so enraged the people, that they besought the Proconsul would deliver them up to their discretion, and they would vindicate the honour of their gods; but the Judge, willing to make a further trial of their constancy, endeavoured to persuade them to idolatry; but, finding he could produce no impression upon them, he ordered them to be scourged, and then delivered to the mob to be stoned to death, who did not delay in putting the sentence into execution; they tied their feet together, dragged them out of the town, and put them to death. In the meantime, hearing what was going on, Denisa broke from her keeper, and rushed to the place where the martyrs were suffering, declaring that she would share the glory and reward of their martyrdom. The Proconsul, hearing of her wonderful preservation and late escape, commanded her to be taken away and beheaded.

Lucian and Marcian were brought up in all the errors of Paganism, and they conformed to the extravagancies of Heathenism with energy and zeal; they professed and practised magic with the undisguised intention of executing their revenge and malice on those who had given them offence, or for the purpose of engaging the affections of females in order to their seduction. These magicians, so called,

* It is said, that the Libertines were surprised by a vision, which so shocked and amazed them with the glory in which it appeared, that they fell at the feet of Denisa, humbly requesting that she would pray for them, that they might not feel the hand of divine justice for their crime.

having conceived a criminal and violent passion for a lady of strict morality, they practised every art to corrupt her mind: all attempts proved unsuccessful and abortive. In vain they employed their divinations, and in vain did they invoke the infernal deities, who were compelled at last to confess, that they had no power over such as acknowledged the true God, and were under the protection of Jesus Christ. This confession astounded these servants of Satan, who speedily arrived at the conclusion, that Christ must be superior to all other powers; and, through the assistance of divine grace, they pursued this suggestion until they were convinced of the absurdity of Paganism, and the rationality and importance of the religion of Christ. The sincerity of their conversion was demonstrated by burning their books of "curious arts" in the face of the whole town, generally supposed to have been Nicomedia, in Bithynia; and in declaring publicly, that for the future they neither knew nor trusted in any being, but that God who had convinced them of their folly and impiety. Having made this declaration, they proceeded to the house of God, where they gave a full account of what had taken place, and received baptism. After this public recognition of Christ as their Saviour and God, they forsook wealth, friends, and all their expectations of worldly aggrandisement, and retired into some private place, where they passed the time in penitential sorrow on account of the sins and transgressions of their previous career.

In a short time the Holy Spirit, who was the cause of their conversion, inspired them with the hallowed resolution of again appearing in the world for the instruction of their former acquaintance in the truths of that holy religion which they had recently embraced; and their addresses received no small weight from the consideration of their former opposition to the doctrines of the Gospel. Nothing but the persecuting spirit of the times impeded their usefulness. These converts were speedily seized and carried before Sabinus, the Governor of Bithynia, who commenced the examination by demanding of Lucian his name and station in society. Lucian speedily satisfied his inquiries, and asserted that he was now a defender and preacher of "the faith which once he destroyed." On the inquiry of the Judge, by what authority he took upon himself the office of a preacher, he replied, "That the laws of humanity and charity obliged all men to endeavour the conversion of their neighbours, and to do all in their power in order to rescue them from the snares of the devil." Marcian's replies to the questions of the Proconsul differed nothing from those of his companion, which caused Sabinus to reproach them both with ingratitude to the gods; from whom, he said, they had received so many favours. Marcian answered to the following effect:—"That their conversion was by the same grace which was given to the Apostle Paul; who, from a zealous persecutor of the church, became a preacher of the Gospel." The Judge then advised them to consult their own security, by returning to what he called their duty; assuring them, that nothing but compliance therewith could procure for them the favour of the gods, or the kindness of their Prince. To this remonstrance Marcian responded, "That he and his companion

could never be sufficiently thankful to that God who had delivered them from darkness, and favoured them with the glorious light they now enjoyed."

Sabinus hearing them thus magnify the power of the Redeemer, asked them why he had not preserved them from the hands of the Magistrate; and why he did not rescue them from the sufferings with which they were threatened. "The true glory of a Christian," replied Marcian, "is to lay down what you call life, that he may obtain eternal life by his constant perseverance in the faith; and we heartily wish that the Almighty would bestow upon you grace and understanding, that you might know the power of that Being whom we obey, and might see his love to all who truly serve and believe in him." The Proconsul ridiculed their expectations of future happiness, and desired them forthwith to obey the imperial order and offer sacrifice, before he proceeded to further extremities. Marcian said, "They were ready to bear the worst he could inflict, and were resolved to suffer any torments rather than undergo the displeasure of the true and living God." The Judge now finding that he could prevail nothing, and lost time and labour in endeavouring to persuade these confessors to abandon the new religion, as it was called, and embrace that which they had discarded, he condemned them to be burnt alive. Upon this they were immediately led to the place of execution; where, being fastened to the stake, and every preparation made, they addressed themselves to their God and Saviour, in the following language:—"Our praises, O Lord Jesus, must fall short of what we owe for our deliverance from pagan error, the happiness of suffering for thy name, and the comfortable portion of being joined with the saints for ever. To thee be the praise and glory for ever. Amen. Into thy hands, O blessed Jesus, we commend our spirits." Thus they breathed out their souls an offering by fire unto the Lord.

Trypho and Respicius were countrymen, and probably relatives: they are mentioned as having been natives of the province of Bithynia, born at Apamea, where their ancestors had for some time resided. They held considerable influence in the Christian community, so that at the commencement of the Decian persecution they were speedily arrested by the order of Aquilinus, the Governor of that part of the country, laden with fetters, and conducted to Nice, where that Magistrate had a residence, and then thrown into prison until Aquilinus was at leisure to sit in judgment upon them. After some days' confinement, they were brought into court, when they appeared so full of faith and of the Holy Ghost as to make them proof against the power of their prosecutors. The first questions which the Governor put to them were of the usual character, relating to their name and station in society; to which they answered distinctly, that their names were Trypho and Respicius, and that they were well born, but that the Christian religion was irrespective of birth or fortune, as all things were governed by divine providence. One, who was on the bench, thinking to intimidate the confessors, said, "That the Emperor had commanded all to be burnt alive who refused to sacrifice to

the gods." To this Respicius replied, "That he and his companion only wished they might be thought worthy to suffer in that cause," and requested the court to show them no favour, but to proceed even to the utmost of their power. Aquilinus endeavoured to persuade them to comply with the imperial command, suggesting they were of mature years, and therefore able to understand the reasonableness of what he proposed. "Yes," said Trypho, "we understand what we do perfectly well, and are therefore determined to remain true to Christ, and contend for Him to the last drop of our blood." The Governor again urged them to conform to the religion of the empire; but finding that their resolution was fixed, he ordered them to be placed upon the rack.

The sentence was scarcely pronounced, when they expressed their readiness to suffer whatever was imposed, by stripping themselves of their garments; and, stepping forward with surprising alacrity, they bore the torture for nearly three hours with wonderful patience, proclaiming aloud the power of the Most High, and the punishment which he had denounced against idolatry. The Governor then ordered them to be exposed in a state of nudity in the open air; and as it was the winter season, the severity of the frost disabled them from walking or even standing without much pain. When they had endured that mortification for some time, they were again taken before the Judge, who asked them whether they were yet inclined to alter their opinions; and being answered in the negative, he ordered them back to prison, assuring them, that if they did not comply with his proposals, they should be treated with still greater severity. Soon after their commitment, Aquilinus made a tour of other cities under his jurisdiction, and on his return called for the two martyrs, whom he once more endeavoured to gain by fair words, which seemed to express a tenderness for them, desiring them to consult their own interests before it was too late. Trypho answered, "That their own real good was the only object of their thoughts; and that they could not follow his advice in any better manner, than by remaining firm in the profession of their faith." The Magistrate, discovering that all his endeavours were in vain, commanded their feet to be pierced with nails, in which condition they were dragged through the streets; but the strength of the holy martyrs supported them under their sufferings, and imparted to them a courage which was superior to the utmost malice of their enemies. Their fortitude astonished the Judge, who ordered them next to be scourged, which was done until the fatigued executioners were compelled to desist. This so exasperated the Magistrate, that he directed the officers to tear their flesh with iron hooks, and to apply lighted torches to their sides; but they remained unmoved in the midst of all these torments. Aquilinus addressed the executioners, commanding them to exert all their power; but the martyrs were superior to them. Again he spoke to them, advising them to consider their own security; but Respicius assured him, that it was not in the power of words or blows to draw them from their duty to God to worship senseless idols. On the following day they were again examined, and endeavours

made to draw them from their steadfastness; but without effect. Trypho once more having assured the court, that they were resolved never to be moved from their resolution of serving God and his Son Jesus Christ, the Governor forthwith passed sentence upon them, and they were beheaded.

Cyril, Bishop of Gortyna, is recorded in the most ancient Martyrologies, as having suffered for the sake of Christ about this period. He was born in the year 166; but it is uncertain whether he was a native of Crete, or of Egypt: his early education in the facts and evidences, doctrines and institutions, of Christianity, proves that he either descended from Christian parents, or was favoured with the good providence of falling into the hands of Christian instructers in early life, inasmuch as he frequently manifested such devoted confidence in the promises and grace of the Redeemer, as to leave friends, and all temporal enjoyments, in search of the followers and confessors of Christ: with these he spent considerable time, and from their instruction and example he derived much profit. His improvement in acquaintance with heavenly virtues rendered him so conspicuous, that at the age of thirty-four he was raised to the episcopate. The charge of those who were committed to his care was an employment far too confined for the exercise of his pastoral zeal: he therefore extended his exertions to such a degree, that he had ere long the pleasure of witnessing, as the fruit of his incessant and untiring labours, the conversion of the whole town of Gortyna, with the exception of a very small portion of the inhabitants, who, though they preferred darkness to light because of the evil character of their deeds, were nevertheless ready to acknowledge his merit, and to pay him the respect which was due to a good man.

The church of Gortyna had enjoyed tranquillity since the death of Severus, until the accession of Decius: this favourable interval of nearly forty years Cyril had improved in the propagation of the Gospel, and in fortifying his flock against the storm which ere long might break in tempest and hail around them. On the publication of the edict of Decius, Lucius, then Governor of Gortyna, ordered the Bishop to be apprehended, and required to offer the accustomed sacrifice to the heathen deities. Cyril was at this period about eighty-four years of age; but his advanced life had not weakened his courage, nor rendered cold his zeal. The Governor, ascertaining his resolution, informed him of the imperial mandate, which adjudged all to the severest torments and death, who refused compliance thereto; and advised him to pay some regard to his own grey hairs, and not heedlessly to throw away the short remains of a life he in the course of nature might yet enjoy. "That consideration," replied Cyril, "will be allowed no weight in the present case: I can never comply with your proposal, while I remember the irreparable consequences of acknowledging any God but Him who alone has title to the name of Most High." Lucius, who was evidently unwilling to put the venerable Prelate to death, observed, that Cyril had a character for great wisdom and experience: he desired, therefore, that he would give some proof of this being the case, by a prompt and cor-

dial obedience to the will of his Prince, and thus, by his example, lead many to loyalty and life. Cyril replied, that the best proof of wisdom he could give, would be to save his own soul, after he had led so many to salvation and heaven, and to bequeath to his spiritual children a pattern of fortitude and courage, such as his high and holy profession required. Other questions were proposed by Lucius, in the hope of shaking the constancy of Cyril; but, finding him altogether invincible, and being confounded with the answers of the Prelate, which were usually taken from the word of God, according to the example of our Lord when assailed by the adversary of mankind, he proceeded to pronounce sentence in the following manner:—"I order and appoint that Cyril, who has lost his senses, and is a declared enemy of our gods, shall be burnt alive." The old man heard this sentence without expressing the least concern, and walked to the place of his execution with a cheerfulness that showed how full he was of the blessed hope of gaining eternal happiness, and expired with the praises of God in his mouth.*

Among the Governors of the Roman provinces none was more active in executing the imperial edict against the Christians than the Governor of Crete, who turned the island into what might properly be termed an Aceldama, or "field of blood." Among many who fell a sacrifice to his endeavours to uproot the Christian faith, none were more conspicuous than Theodulus, Saturnius, Europus, Gelasius, Eunicianus, Zeticus, Cleomenes, Agathopas, Bastides, and Evaristus; who, being brought before the Governor from various parts of Crete, united against the enemy in a way that has made their memory famous to posterity. The first three were inhabitants of Gortyna, where they had probably been grounded in the faith by Cyril their Bishop: the rest were brought from different towns in the island. On the day appointed for their trial, as soon as they appeared in the court, they were commanded to offer sacrifice to Jupiter, in obedience to the will and express command of the Emperor. Upon their refusing to defile their hearts or hands with such an iniquitous act, the Judge assured them they should be put to the severest tortures, while their heathen countrymen surrendered themselves to the pleasures and diversions of a day dedicated to the honour of that deity whose worship they had declined. The confessors, however, who resolved to let no consideration deter them from their duty to the true God, replied, that they should esteem all they could suffer for the supreme Being, as the most substantial pleasure they could enjoy in this world. The Governor then attempted to secure their veneration for Jupiter, Juno, and Rhæa, by expatiating in commendation of these fictitious gods; but as their stories, when told to the best

* Ancient Martyrologies say that he died in the flame; but some later writers of the acts of the martyrdom of Cyril inform us, that he was miraculously delivered, and that the fire burnt out without hurting him: they farther assure us, that the Pagans who saw this prodigy, went immediately and acquainted Lucius therewith; who, being convinced of the truth of this miraculous deliverance, glorified the God of the Christians, and stayed all further proceedings against the reverend Prelate. But on hearing that he continued to employ his life in the conversion of numbers to the truth as it is in Jesus, he retracted his former clemency, and ordered him to be beheaded.

advantage, are both ridiculous and absurd, his recital of them furnished Theodulus and the rest an opportunity of making several remarks upon them, which were certainly far from being agreeable to the Governor, who stopped their mouths by commanding them to be laid upon the rack and tortured for their impious contempt of the gods. The martyrs remaining the same unalterable assertors of the vanity of idols, and the greatness of the one true God, though their bodies were torn in the most miserable and barbarous manner, the Governor passed sentence upon them, and they were all beheaded: their latest breath was employed in fervent prayer to the Almighty that he would perpetuate the faith of Christ in that district. Secundianus was accused in the presence of a Captain of the army of Decius, of being a Christian: he confessed, without hesitation, that such was the case, and was committed to prison. As the soldiers were conducting him thither, Verianus and Marcellinus, two Christians, asked where they were conducting the innocent. They were immediately arrested, and led to a town called Centumcellæ, where they were required to offer sacrifice. This they not only refused to do, but, offering some indignity to the idol, they were all condemned to suffer: at first they were beaten with staves; then they were exposed on a gibbet, where they were tormented with fire, which was held to their sides; ultimately they were beheaded.

The short, but sanguinary, reign of Decius was now soon to close. Owing to the incursions of the Goths and other barbarous nations, Decius resolved to oppose them in person in Thrace and Mœsia; and having made considerable preparations, and leaving the government of the empire in the hands of the Senate, he took his son with him, and marched toward the enemy. His successes over the foe were at first numerous, and promised a speedy and triumphant victory; which would have been the case, had he not been baffled by the treacherous conduct of his own Generals. The chief of the Goths gave him to understand, that if Decius would allow him to depart in peace, he would at once abandon the possessions he had acquired, and return to his own country; but the Emperor, having obtained so many advantages over his enemy, was determined to punish former breaches of contract of which they had been guilty, by taking the whole of the opposing army as prisoners, or consigning them to prompt destruction, and refused to listen to his overtures. He then gave orders to Trebonianus Gallus, the Governor of the frontiers of Mœsia, carefully to guard certain passes through which the Goths designed to march; and, to make assurance doubly sure, that he might effectually vanquish and secure them, he placed under his command a powerful party of men. But Gallus, being envious of his master, and thirsting for imperial rule, communicated intelligence of the movements of Decius to the enemy, promising to let him pass quietly, and also advising him to divide his army into two parts, one of which he recommended should lie in ambush, and that the other should attack the camp of the Emperor, who would suspect no such manœuvre; and then, feigning a retreat, draw Decius into the ambuscade, when he might with facility be destroyed. Historians differ in

the account which they give of this treachery; but the treason of Gallus is confessed, and the Emperor was induced to encounter the Goths under circumstances of great disadvantage. The high-spirited Barbarians preferred death to slavery. An obscure town of Mœsia was the scene of the battle. The Gothic army was drawn up in three lines; and, either from choice or accident, the front of the third line was covered by a morass. In the beginning of the action, the son of Decius, a youth of the fairest hopes, and already associated with the honours of the purple, was slain by an arrow, in the sight of his afflicted father; who, summoning all his fortitude, admonished the dismayed troops, that the loss of a single soldier was of little importance to the republic. The conflict was terrible: it was the combat of despair against grief and rage. The first line of the Goths at length gave way in disorder; the second, advancing to sustain it, shared its fate; and the third only remaining entire, prepared to dispute the passage of the morass, which was imprudently attempted by the presumption of the enemy. "Here the fortune of the day turned," to adopt the language of Tacitus,* "and all things became adverse to the Romans: the place deep with ooze, sinking under those who stood, slippery to such as advanced; their armour heavy, the waters deep; nor could they wield, in that uneasy situation, their weighty javelins. The Barbarians, on the contrary, were inured to encounters in the bogs, their persons tall, their spears long, such as could wound at a distance." In this morass the Roman army, after an ineffectual struggle, was irrecoverably lost. Decius, that he might not fall into the hands of the enemy, put the spurs to his horse, and rode furiously into the morass, where, owing to the weight of his armour, he was soon swallowed up, and his body never could be found. Such was the miserable death of Decius, a Prince not deficient in ability, but distinguished during his reign by the most sanguinary and cruel persecution of the church of God: he was resolutely determined to effect its ruin, and perished himself in the attempt. The blood of the Christians which he shed not only fell upon him, his son, and his army, but upon the whole Roman empire, as a blasting, withering curse, by the inroads of the Goths and other barbarous nations. "And thus much," says Foxe, "of the tyranny of this wicked Decius against God's saints. Now to touch also the power of God's vengeance and punishment against him. Like as we see commonly a tempest that is vehement not long to continue, so it happened with this tyrannical tormentor; who, reigning but two years, according to Eusebius,† or three at the most, as saith Orosius,‡ among the middle of the Barbarians with whom he did war, was then slain with his son. Like as he had before slain Philip and his son, his predecessors; so was he, with his son, slain by the righteous judgment of God himself." §

* A representation of a similar engagement which took place between a Roman army and a German tribe. (Taciti Annales, lib. i., cap. lxiv.)

† Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 1.

‡ Pauli Orosii Historia, lib. iv., cap. 14.

§ Foxe, "Acts and Monuments," vol. i., p. 190, 8vo. Seeley's edit.

CHAPTER VII.

The Character of Gallus—Humiliating Condition of the Roman Empire—A dreadful Pestilence—Testimony of Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria—Conduct of the Christians—Testimonies of Dr. Burton—Dr. Cave—Pomponius Lætus—Death of Hostilianus—The Plague imputed to the Christians—Demetrian—Cyprian's Treatise "Liber ad Demetrianum"—Extracts—Approaching Persecution—Council at Carthage—More moderate Measures taken respecting the Lapsed—Reason for this Mitigation—Imperial Edict—Letter of Cyprian to the Thibaritans—Benevolence of Cyprian—Severity of the Persecution at Rome—Arrest of Cornelius—Epistle of Cyprian to him—Contradictory Statements respecting the Martyrdom of the Bishop of Rome—Plumbatæ—Lucius—His Banishment and Recall—Epistle of Cyprian to Lucius—Character of Gallus as a Persecutor—Testimony of Mosheim—Decretal Epistles—Gross Forgeries—Intended to advance the Claims of Romish Supremacy—Animadversions on Mosheim—Cruelties of the Gallian Persecution—The Emperor destitute of moral Courage—The popular Cry constantly respected—The People most eager to persecute—Persecution instigated by the Populace—Numerous Testimonies to the Severity of the Persecution of Gallus—Martyrdom of Hippolytus—Disastrous State of the Roman Empire—Unpopularity of the Emperor—Rebellion of his General, Æmilian—Gallus and his Son are slain—The Senate gave a Sanction to the Rights of Conquest—Profession of Æmilian, who meets with a Competitor in Valerian, by whom he is slain—Valerian ascends the Throne—His Character, and that of his Son Gallienus, his Associate in the Empire—Brief Period of Tranquillity to the Church—Death of Origen—Dispute concerning the Baptism of Heretics—State of that Controversy—Character of Stephen, Bishop of Rome—His intemperate Conduct—Cyprian on the Independence of Christian Bishops and Churches—The grasping Propensity of the Church at Rome—Held no superior Powers or Influence—The Attempts of Stephen condemned—Cause of the Change which took place in the Conduct of Valerian towards the Christian Church—Macrianus, his History and Character—Commencement of the Persecution under Valerian—Nature of the Measures employed to induce Apostacy—Supposed Martyrdom of Stephen—Contradictory Accounts of the Event—Cyprian writes to the Churches—He is summoned before the Proconsul, Paternus—Is interrogated—Banished to Curubis—His Sympathy with, and Benevolence to, the Sufferers, whom he encourages by an Epistle—Martyrdom of Saturninus, Bishop of Toulouse—Of Ruffina and Secunda—Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, is brought before the Prefect—History of Dionysius—State of the Persecution in Egypt—Frumentarii—Dr. Cave quoted—Singular Escape of the Bishop—Voluntarily conceals himself—Returns to Alexandria—Is arrested—Is interrogated by Æmilian, and banished to Cephro—Heresies of Sabellius and Paul of Samosata—Synods—Death of Dionysius—Valerian's Persian Expedition—Macrianus—The Persecution carried on with greater Severity—The Imperial Edict—Its Character—Martyrdom of Xystus—And of Laurentius—Remarks upon his History—Martyrdom of Romanus—Cyprian returns from Banishment—Prefers to suffer at Carthage—How this Object was attained—Is apprehended and brought before Galerius Maximus, the Proconsul—The Interrogation—Martyrdom of Cyprian—His general Character.

The reins of empire were held with a feeble grasp by Gallus, the successor of Decius, who was little qualified either to maintain the integrity of the kingdom, or to prosecute the plans of the deceased Emperor for the reformation of manners. The views which he enter-

tained of Christianity did not tend to tranquillize the church; but his naturally easy temper restrained him from the prosecution of violent measures, though the work of persecution was by no means discontinued during his reign. His conduct as Emperor was characterized by great pusillanimity and indiscretion. From respectful remembrance of the late Emperor, the imperial title was conferred on Hostilianus, his only-surviving son; but equal rank, with more effectual power, was granted to Gallus, whose experience and ability were considered adapted to the guardianship of the Prince, and to the present condition of the empire. His first care was to deliver the Illyrian provinces from the intolerable weight of the victorious Goths. He consented to leave in their hands the rich fruits of their invasion, an immense booty; and, what was still more disgraceful, a great number of prisoners of the highest merit and quality. He plentifully supplied their camp with every conveniency that could assuage their angry spirits, or facilitate their so-much-wished-for departure; and he even promised to pay them annually a large sum of gold, on condition they should never afterwards infest the Roman territories by their incursions. To such a state of ignominy and contempt the Roman empire had not been reduced. During the period of the Scipios, the most wealthy Monarchs of the earth, "who courted the protection of the victorious commonwealth, were gratified with such trifling presents as could only derive a value from the hand that bestowed them; an ivory chain, a coarse garment of purple, an inconsiderable piece of plate, or a quantity of copper coin.* After the wealth of nations had centred in Rome, the Emperors displayed their greatness, and even their policy, by the regular exercise of a steady and moderate liberality towards the allies of the state. They relieved the poverty of the Barbarians, honoured their merit, and recompensed their fidelity. These voluntary marks of bounty were understood to flow, not from the fears, but merely from the generosity or the gratitude, of the Romans; and whilst presents and subsidies were liberally distributed among friends and suppliants, they were sternly refused to such as claimed them as a debt. But this stipulation, of an annual payment to a victorious enemy, appeared, without disguise, in the light of an ignominious tribute; the minds of the Romans were not yet accustomed to accept such unequal laws from a tribe of barbarians; and the Prince, who by a necessary concession had probably saved his country, became the object of the general contempt and aversion." †

The judgments of the Most High were still abroad in the land. A fearful pestilence, which commenced its ravages about the time of the demise of Decius, continued to spread devastation and death for nearly fifteen years. The Martyrologist Foxe gives the following fearful description of this scourge:—"Neither did the just hand of God

* A *sella*, a *toga*, and a golden *patera* of five pounds' weight, were accepted with joy and gratitude by the wealthy King of Egypt. (Livy, lib. xxvii., cap. 4.) *Quina millia æris*, a weight of copper, in value about £18 sterling, was the usual present made to foreign Ambassadors. (Lib. xxi., cap. 9.)

† Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," &c., vol. i., pp. 427—429, 8vo. edit. Milman.

plague the Emperor only, but also revenged, as well, the heathen Gentiles and persecutors of his word throughout all provinces and dominions of the Roman monarchy. Of this plague or pestilence testifieth Dionysius to Hierax,* a Bishop in Egypt, where he declareth the mortality of this plague to be so great in Alexandria, where he was Bishop, that there was no house in the whole city free. And although the greatness of the pestilence touched also the Christians somewhat, yet it scourged the heathen idolaters much more; besides that the order of their behaviour in the one and in the other was much diverse. For, as the aforesaid Dionysius doth record, the Christians, through brotherly love and piety, did not refuse to visit and comfort each other, and to minister what need required, notwithstanding it was to them great danger; for divers there were who, in closing up their eyes, in washing their bodies, and in interring them in the ground, were next themselves who followed in their graves; yet all this stayed not them from doing their duty, and showing mercy one to another. Whereas the Gentiles, contrarily, being extremely visited by the hand of God, felt the plague, but considered not the Striker, neither yet considered they their neighbour; but, every man shifting for himself, none cared for the other; but such as were infected, some they would cast out of doors, half dead, to be devoured of dogs and wild beasts; some they suffered to die within their houses, without any succour; some they suffered to lie unburied, so that no man durst come near them.† And yet, notwithstanding all their voiding and shifting, the pestilence followed them whithersoever they went, and miserably consumed them; insomuch that Dionysius, Bishop at the same time of Alexandria, thus reporteth of his own city,—that such a mortality was then among them, that the said city of Alexandria had not in number so many altogether, both old and young, from fourteen to fourscore years of age, as it was wont to contain before of the old men only from the age of forty to

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 21, 22.

† "Every detailed account which has come down to us of severe epidemics in ancient times, represents a depravation of morals as consequent upon sickness. It was so in the present instance; and the most painful feature was the unnatural disregard displayed by the Heathen toward their relations and friends. The Christians, on the other hand, were unremitting in their attentions to the dying and the dead. Cyprian and the other Bishops set a noble example of devotedness to their flocks. The fear of contagion seemed never to be thought of; and, as far as money or personal attendance could mitigate the severity of such a scourge, the Christians enjoyed an advantage which could not fail to be observed by the Heathen. In Pontus this effect was very remarkable. Gregory was still Bishop of Neocæsarea; and his conduct during the pestilence was the cause of many persons coming over to believe the Gospel." (Burton.) "About this time happened that miserable plague, that so much afflicted the Roman world, wherein Carthage had a very deep share. Vast multitudes were swept away every day, (Pont. Diac. in Vit. Cypr., p. xxxvi., London, Bowyer, 1717,) the fatal messenger knocking as he went along at every door. The streets were filled with the carcases of the dead, which seemed to implore the assistance of the living, and to challenge a right by the laws of nature and humanity, as that which shortly themselves might stand in need of. But, alas! all in vain; every one trembled, and fled, and shifted for himself, deserted his dearest friends and nearest relations; none considered what might be his own case, nor how reasonable it was that he should do for another, what he would another should do for him; and if any stayed behind, it was only to make a prey." (Cave, "Lives of the Fathers.")

seventy.* Pomponius Lætus also, and other Latin writers, making mention of the said pestilence, declare how the beginning thereof first came (as they think) out of Ethiopia, and from the hot countries; and so, invading and wasting first the south parts, from thence spread into the east; and then proceeding further, and increasing in other parts of the world, especially wherever the edicts of the Emperor went against the Christians, it followed after and consumed the greater part of the population, whereby many places became desolate and destitute of inhabitant." Hostilianus himself fell a victim to it, leaving Gallus in sole possession of the empire.

We have frequently had occasion to remark, that visitations from heaven, such as pestilence, famine, or earthquake, were generally adduced by the Heathen as a charge against the Christians, as being the cause of the gods being so implacably angry with mankind. It was so in the present instance; and in order to vindicate the cause of Christ from such imputation, Cyprian manfully addressed a discourse to Demetrian, who had not been backward in imputing the ravages of the pestilence to the anger of the gods at the spread of Christianity. The person who is addressed in this tractate appears to have had some civil authority, and he had made use of it to persecute the church of God. The reason why the Bishop of Carthage employed his pen in reproving this reviler, he states in the following passage:—"When you assert that very many persons complain that to us is to be imputed,† that wars arise more frequently, that pest and famine rage, and that long seasons of drought suspend the fall of rain, it becomes no longer a duty to be silent, lest silence should argue, not modest feeling, but sense of weakness; and our scorn to refute false charges, appear as an acknowledgment that they were just ones."‡ He proves that the various evils that had come upon the world could not satisfactorily be attributed to Christianity, and that they were rather to be ascribed to the gross abominations of the people, and to the wild and even brutal rage which had been manifested towards the Christian church; that the latter was sufficient to provoke the Almighty to bring these calamities upon them, as a punishment for their folly and madness in endeavouring to effect the destruction of a religion which was in itself so innocuous, and dear to Heaven. We cannot refrain from adducing two passages: Cyprian says, "That wars are prolonged in greater frequency, that barrenness and famine accumulate distress, health is broken up by raging sicknesses, and the human race, laid waste by desolating pestilence, know that herein prediction has been given; that in the last days mischiefs

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 21. The men from forty to seventy years of age were called ὰμογερόντες at Alexandria, and were registered to receive a public distribution of corn.

† This was a popular notion among the Pagans, and is mentioned by Tertullian, Apol., cap. 40, ad Nationes, lib. i., cap. 9; in the Edict of Maximin, Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. ix., cap. vii.; by Origen, in Matth. Comment. Interpret., sect. xxxviii.; in Origen contra Celsum, lib. iii., cap. 15; by Prudentius, contra Symmach., lib. ii., p. 683. It is replied to, among others, by Arnobius, in his work against the Gentiles; by Austin, in his "City of God;" and by Ambrose, in his reply to Symmachus.

‡ Cypriani Opera, Liber ad Demetrianum, præfatio, p. 193, edit. Paris.

were to be multiplied, and changes of adversity to advance; and that as the day of judgment approached, the censure of an offended God was to be more and more enkindled to the plaguing of the race of man. These things befall us, not, as your false complaint and unskilful ignorance of truth pretends and affirms, because your gods are not worshipped by us, but because God has no worship from you. For seeing he is Lord and Ruler of the world, and all things proceed at his arbitrement and nod, and nothing can happen save what He hath either wrought or permitted to be, surely, when those things happen which manifest the wrath of an offended God, they happen not because of us, by whom God is worshipped, but are called down by your offences and deserts, by whom God is neither sought nor feared, and who have never left your vain superstitions for a knowledge of the true religion, that God, who is the one God of all, may from all receive worship and prayer. Hear him in brief himself speaking; hear his own divine voice both teaching and warning us. (Deut. vi. 13; Exod. xx. 3; Jer. xxv. 6; Haggai i. 9; Amos iv. 7.) Behold, the Lord is wrathful and angered, and threatens, because you turn not unto him; and you are surprised, or complain, in this obstinacy or contempt of yours, because the rain comes down sparingly, because the earth moulders into unsightly dust, because the sterile glebe hardly yields its jejune and pallid herbage, because the stricken hail subdues the vine, the overwhelming whirlwind prostrates the olive, drought stays the fountain, a breathing pestilence corrupts the air, and morbid diseases consume mankind; whereas these things all come from the provoking of your sins, and God is the more angered when, such and so great as they are, they avail nothing. That these things are done either for the control of the revolting, or the punishment of those who have done wrong, the same God in holy Scripture thus declares: 'In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction.' Herein agree other words of the Prophet, devoted and dedicated to God: 'Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction.' (Jer. v. 3.) Lo! plagues are drawn down from God, and fear of God there is none. Lo! stripes and blows from heaven fail not; yet there is no trembling, there is no fear. If no such censure entered among the affairs of men, would not boldness of crime among men become much greater in their security from penalty?"*

Without any hesitation, Cyprian attributes the awful visitation to the hostility of the people to the Christian character, and the retributive hand of the Most High, of which he did not fail to admonish Demetrian. "Consider now what really is the thing, concerning which I mainly speak with you; your hostility, namely, to us who are innocent men, which is an insult against God, being a ravaging and an oppressing of his servants. It is a small thing that your lives are defiled by all manner of flagrant vices, by the guilt of dismal crimes, by an assemblage of bloodshed and rapine, that true religion is subverted by false superstitions, and God is never either sought or feared; besides this, you harass God's servants with unjust persecu-

* Cypriani Opera, Liber ad Demetrianum, cap. ii.

tions, men dedicated to his honour and name. It is not enough that you worship not God yourself, but you pursue those who do worship him with a sacrilegious hatred. You neither worship God, nor in any wise allow him to be worshipped; and while others, who venerate not only these useless idols and images wrought by the hand of man, but even portents and monsters, find favour in your sight, it is the worshipper of God that alone displeases you. The funeral relics of victims and of sheep, in all parts, smoke within your temples; but altars to God are either nowhere, or they are concealed. Crocodiles and baboons, stones and serpents, enjoy your worship: God only in the earth is either left unworshipped, or is worshipped not with impunity. The innocent, the just, the friends of God, you deprive of their home, you despoil of their patrimony, you oppress with chains, you inclose in prison, you perish with sword, with wild beasts, with fire. You are not content to make a short work of our pains, and to use a straight and quick brevity of infliction: you rend our bodies with long-drawn torments; you lacerate the vitals with manifold appliances; too savage and hard-hearted to be content with common torments, your imaginative cruelty invents new species of suffering."

"Whence," Cyprian proceeds, "is this insatiable ardour for bloodshed, this endless lust for cruelty? Take your choice of these two things: to be a Christian either is, or is not, a crime. If a crime, why not put to death every one who says he is a Christian? If not a crime, why punish the guiltless? In this case I ought rather to be tortured, should I pretend I was not a Christian. If, fearing punishment from you, I falsely and dishonestly disavowed my past profession, and my withholding of worship from your gods, I should then deserve to be tortured, and to be reduced to confession of my offence by pain inflicted; as culprits in other cases, who deny an act they are charged with, are put to torture in order that bodily suffering may extract a truth, which the voice refuses to acknowledge. But now, when I confess of my own accord, when I lift up my voice, and, in words oftentimes and perpetually repeated, give you to know that I am a Christian, why use torment against one who owns it, one who pulls down your gods, not in hidden and obscure places, but openly and publicly, and in the market-place itself, within hearing of your Magistrates and rulers: so that, little as was the ground of blaming me before, it has increased both your hatred and your punishment of me, that I pronounce myself a Christian in a frequented place, and among the crowd, and put you and your gods to confusion by an expressed and public manifestation. Yet why make this infirm body your object? why go into contention with the weakness of this earthly flesh? Wrestle rather against the energies of the soul, assail the mental power, pull down my faith, conquer me, if you can, in controversy, conquer me by reason. Let no one think that this has happened by chance, or is a thing of accident: since long ago holy Scripture set forth, and said, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord;' and again the Holy Spirit admonishes us, and says, 'Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.'

Hence it is plain and manifest, that not through us, but in behalf of us, fall all those things which God in his wrath sends down."* "Harm the servants of God and of Christ no more with your persecutions; for divine vengeance protects them when they are harmed."

Cyprian beheld the gathering storm, and prepared to meet it. The long continuance of the plague awoke into new life the popular superstition. The Bishop convened a Council at Carthage, which was composed of forty-one Bishops, who were governed by more moderate principles than those who swayed the assembly at the previous convocation. The Council of the preceding year had only held out to the lapsed the prospect of reconciliation, after a long course of discipline; but now, as a severe trial was approaching, it was thought most prudent to admit them at once as soldiers who were impatient to show their fidelity to their heavenly Master. The individuals compos ing this Council did not judge it fitting or reasonable that men should be left unarmed and exposed in the day of conflict; but that they should be able, by due preparation, to defend themselves with "the whole armour of God." For how could they hope to persuade individuals to shed their blood in the cause of the Redeemer, if they prohibited them the benefit of Christian communion in the church of Christ on earth? How could they be expected to drink of the martyr's cup, from whom the church withheld the privilege of drinking the "cup of the Lord?" While tranquillity and rest smiled upon the church, the period allotted to penance was protracted; and the *Sacrificati* were not allowed re-admittance into the hallowed community of God's people but at the hour of death. The enemy, however, was now at the gate, and the church was to be made ready for the conflict, prepared for suffering; and those who by the sincerity of their repentance had shown themselves ready to "resist unto blood," and to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," were to be encouraged. We are not surprised to learn that many who had lapsed in the Decian persecution, henceforth redeemed their character by submitting courageously to every torture.

The repose which the death of Decius and the subsequent accession of Gallus procured for the church was very temporary and short-lived. To appease the fury of the populace which the pestilence had excited, an imperial edict was published, in which all the Romans were commanded to sacrifice to the gods, as a means of averting their wrath; and the refusal on the part of many led to numerous scenes of cruelty and of blood. The number of the martyrs, however, was by no means so great as in the time of Decius; for the plague, which continued fiercely to rage, kept the barbarous Heathen otherwise employed. The Bishop of Carthage did not leave his city, as he had been obliged to do two years before: he continued ministering to his important charge, and preserving his life, though every day witnessed the imprisonment or martyrdom of some of his Clergy.† At the

* Cypriani Opera, Liber ad Demetrianum, cap. iii.

† "His attention to the spiritual and temporal wants of his flock was unceasing. Wherever Christians were suffering, he looked upon them as a brother, or rather as a father; and while, in the treatise which he addressed to the Heathen Demetrian, he

approach of this new persecution Cyprian wrote a letter of exhortation to the North-African church of the Thibaritans, in which he thus expresses himself:—"Let none of you, my beloved brethren, when he sees how our people are driven away, and scattered from fear of the persecution, disquiet himself because he no longer sees the brethren together, nor hears the Bishops preach. We, who dare not shed blood, but are ready to allow our blood to be shed, cannot, at such a time, be collected together. Wheresoever, in those days, any one of the brethren may be separated for a while by the necessities of the time, and absent in body, not in spirit, let him not be agitated by the dreadfulness of that flight; and if he be obliged to retire and hide himself, let not the solitude of a desert place terrify him. He, whom Christ accompanies in his flight, is not alone; he is not alone, who, preserving God's temple constantly, wheresoever he is, is not without God. And if in desert places, and on the mountains, a robber shall assault the fugitive, a wild beast attack him, or hunger, thirst, or cold destroy him; or if, when he passes over the sea in haste, the fury of the storm shall sink his vessel; yet Christ in every place beholds his warrior fighting." *

As might naturally be expected, the Bishops of the metropolis, under the very eyes of the Emperor, were the first objects of the persecution; for how could people expect to put down the Christians in the provinces, while they suffered their Prelates to remain in Rome? Cornelius was one of the earliest victims. His vigilance and zeal appeared at the commencement of the outbreak to great advantage, so long as he was allowed to remain with his flock, whom he animated with frequent and powerful exhortations; and when he was obliged to leave them, he left a glorious example of fortitude and courage. He was speedily apprehended, and before the Magistrates he made a noble confession of the faith, which caused Cyprian to address to him a letter of congratulation.† What happened to him afterwards is

exposed the falsehood of ascribing the present pestilence to the Christians, he excited the Christians at Carthage to make a charitable collection for some sufferers in Numidia. An incursion of Barbarians had carried off a great number of prisoners of both sexes; and Cyprian raised a subscription for their ransom, which amounted to £3,000." (Burton.) Gibbon, in his "Decline and Fall," estimates it at £850. The words are, "Sestertia centum millia nummorum."

* Cypriani Opera, Epist. ad Thibaritanos, p. 78, edit. Paris.

† Cypriani Opera, Epist. lvi., ad Cornelium in exilio, de ejus confessione, p. 82, edit. 8vo., Paris.—This address is truly characteristic of the piety and zeal of the writer, and reflects immortal honour on the Bishop of Rome. A few sentences of it we must translate:—"We have heard the glorious character of your faith and constancy, and received the notice of it with such transports of joy, as if we ourselves were partakers with you in your deserved applauses. For since we have one church, one mind, one common interest, where is the Bishop who takes not as much pleasure in the honours of a brother Bishop as he would take in his own? Or where are those brethren who do not claim a share in the common joy of their fraternity? Accordingly I cannot express to you the triumph and satisfaction wherewith we received, in these parts, the notice of your noble conduct, of your setting yourself at the head of the confession, and leading on your brethren to the conflict, and of their numbers increasing through the illustrious example set them by such a leader; so that, whilst you move on foremost in the path of holy conquest, you invite many to follow you, and encourage your people to be confessors, by becoming one first yourself in the name of them all. Thus we are at a loss which most to commend,—the alacrity and constancy of your faith, or the harmony and unanimity wherewith your brethren follow so good a prece-

uncertain; and what are termed "The Acts of Saint Cornelius" are generally recognised as fabulous in a very disgraceful degree, so as to have no claim whatever to any reasonable credit: it is true, indeed, that they have been received by the historians, Bede, Ado, and Anastasius, with many others, far more considerable for their number than their authority. It is said that he was banished to Centumcellæ, now called Civita Vecchia, where he died a natural death, according to the term employed in the Pontifical of Bucherius, *Dormitionem accepit.** With regard to the title given him by Jerome, namely,

dent. On the one hand, the courage of the Bishop who set the example hath been approved by a public trial of it; on the other, the adherence of his people to him in this exigence hath been sufficiently displayed by their keeping him company. Whilst you have but one mind and one tongue among you, the whole church of Rome may well be said to have confessed the name of Christ upon this occasion; and that faith which the blessed Apostle so extolled, hath been signalized in it. Even then he foresaw, through the Spirit, this your noble bearing and firmness; and what he commended at that time in your forefathers, is justly applicable to you their children, and was doubtless designed to provoke you to imitation. Your fortitude and unity are great and glorious patterns to the rest of our brethren, whom you have taught thereby to have profound and reverential sentiments concerning the Most High, to abide by Christ firmly, and to persevere in every trial. You have instructed our people to unite themselves closely with their Bishop in all difficulties and dangers, and to stand by each other in the seasons of persecution. You have convinced us that our union may render us invincible, and that the God of peace will refuse nothing to such as pray to him in concert, with peaceable and agreeing hearts. The adversary began the onset upon Christ's camp with great rage and violence; but he was repulsed with a courage equal to that which he brought with him, and found his storms and terrors met with a proportionate measure of bravery and spirit. He fancied he had obtained another opportunity of advantage over the servants of God, and that he should find them, like raw undisciplined soldiers, in no state of readiness or preparation to receive him; and consequently imagined that he should gain his point, as usual, at the very first attack. He began with an attempt to single out, like a wolf, one sheep from the rest of the flock, or, like a hawk, he endeavoured to separate some one bird from his companions: being conscious that he had not strength enough to engage them all together, he attempted them singly, and gathered what stragglers he could. But he shortly found that the host of Christ was on their guard, standing to arms as a united and compact body; accordingly he was speedily repulsed; he found that they knew better how to die than to be conquered; they were therefore invincible, because they were not afraid of dying; they might not resist aggressors, it being contrary to their innocence and sanctity to kill even a guilty person, but they were ready to give up their lives, and to make their retreat, as soon as might be, out of a world so full of wickedness and barbarity. What a glorious spectacle was this, and how worthy to have the Almighty beholding it! What joy must it be to the church of Christ to have witnessed his soldiers advancing in his presence to the attack which the enemy made upon them, not in separate companies, or in small bodies, but to have seen the whole camp at once moving towards it? For it is a legitimate construction, that all would have engaged, if all had heard of it, when every one who did hear pressed forward with such alacrity. How many of the lapsed have there recovered from their fall? They maintained their ground upon this occasion with intrepidity, deriving additional constancy and courage from their shame and concern for their former miscarriage; from whence it plainly appears, that they had been surprised and disconcerted before from the novelty and suddenness of their situation and peril; but they recovered themselves, and the fear of the Lord imparted to them new life, so that they waited henceforth with patience and resolution, not only for the pardon of their sin, but for the honour and crown of martyrdom."

* We are informed, on the authority of Platina and others, which authority by our best-informed historians has been almost simultaneously rejected, that "Cornelius, before he went into banishment, and at the instance of Lucina, a holy matron, by night removed the bodies of Peter and Paul out of the public burial-places, where they seemed to be less secure; that of Paul was by Lucina herself deposited in ground of her own, in the *Via Oxiensis*, near the place where he suffered; and that of Peter was by Cornelius laid near the place where he was martyred, not far from the temple of Apollo. But when Decius came to understand that Cornelius had received letters from Cyprian, he

that of martyr,* by which he is distinguished in his catalogue, it was imposed upon all those who for the confession of the faith died in prison, which is supposed to have been the case with Cornelius.

Cornelius was succeeded in the bishopric of Rome by Lucius, who was banished from that city almost immediately after his election. He is supposed to have been a Roman by birth, and the son of one Porphyrius; he was admitted among the Clergy of the imperial city, and during the days of Fabian and Cornelius was of some note. His courage and fidelity in asserting and defending the truths of the Gospel rendered him obnoxious to the enemies of Christianity, and led to his exile, which, however, was of short continuance; and on his return Cyprian, in the name of the African church, addressed to him a congratulatory epistle. Not long after this, he was again apprehended; and, following in the wake of his predecessor, he won the crown of martyrdom, having held the see only a few months. The Bishops of Rome, Cornelius and Lucius, appear to have been the only individuals of influence and rank who suffered during the reign of Gallus; and, like most of the persecutions under the heathen Emperors, this assault may be attributed chiefly to popular feeling. The pestilence was raging with fierceness and an awful fatality; the people were discontented, and their murmurs were loud and deep. To appease the multitude, and induce public confidence, an edict was issued, which did not direct an attack to be made upon the Christians, but merely admonished the populace to mitigate the wrath of heaven, and prevail on the gods to avert from them the plague, and other calamities under which they were then suffering. Though Gallus did not run the length of his predecessors in those acts of cruelty and injustice towards the Christians which characterized them, he nevertheless pandered to their superstition and bigotry; and when the clamour was raised, "Let Cyprian be thrown to the lions!" he sent

caused him to be brought from Centumcellæ to Rome; and in the temple of Tellus, the City Prefect being present, he thus expostulates with him: 'Are you resolved,' said he, 'to live thus contumaciously, that, neither regarding the gods, nor fearing the commands and threatenings of Princes, you keep a correspondence tending to endanger the public weal?' To whom Cornelius replied, 'That the letters which he received and returned were only concerning the praises of Christ, and the design of the redemption of souls; and contained nothing in them tending to the diminution of the empire.' At this Decius, being enraged, gave command that Cornelius should first be scourged with a kind of whip, which had small globes of lead fastened to the end; that afterwards he should be conveyed to the temple of Mars, and there pay adoration to his image; and upon his refusal so to do, that he should be put to death. The good man, as they were leading him to punishment, disposed of what he had to Stephen, the Archdeacon, and afterwards he was beheaded." (Lives of the Popes, by Baptista Platina. Translated by Sir Paul Rycaut. Fol., second edition., London, 1688.) We have already alluded to that species of torture which was termed a whip, and was armed with small globes of lead. It was called, "plumbatum." "Flagellum, cujus lora plumbeis globulis in extremo instructa erant. Acta S. Castuli, Mart. ii., 4. Jussit — deorsum in eculeo suspendi, et atrocissime plumbatis cædi. Vox frequens in Vitis S. S. in Cod. Theod. et apud Scriptores, quos laudant Brissonius de Verbor. Signific. Meursius in Gloss. V. Πλουμβατον. Jacobus Gotofredus ad l. 2, Cod. Theod. de Quest., &c." (Du Cange.)

* Hieron. Liber De Viris Illustribus, cap. lxvi. Cornelius is reckoned by Jerome among the ecclesiastical writers, on account of the four letters which he wrote to Fabius, Bishop of Antioch, who seemed not to disapprove of the tenets of Novatian. He wrote others, of which two are still extant among the Epistles of Cyprian; and some fragments of a fourth letter to Fabius have been transmitted to us by Eusebius.

into banishment and to martyrdom the Prelates of Rome.* of the most enlightened and liberal of the writers on ecclesias history, alluding to the apprehension of Cornelius, and his b called upon to defend himself before the Prætor, observes, that ' sooner had intelligence of this reached the people, than the grea part of them at once ran to the Magistrate, and not only intrepi there made an open profession of their faith in Christ, but declar themselves ready to lay down their lives with their Bishop in defen of such faith. Not one of this multitude, however, was either put death or subjected to torture, or even so much as thrown into priso All that was done was to send Cornelius, the Bishop of the flock, in banishment. No greater punishment than this was inflicted on h

* As it regards the Bishops of Rome in those early days, all have had certain decre Epistles ascribed to them, bearing their names and titles. Lucius has had one of th impudent forgeries filiated upon him, in which those interested members of the Chu of Rome, the fabricators of these documents, have most completely missed their ai He is represented as writing to the church in France and Spain, and appointing such order and form of the church as would be utterly incompatible with the time then p sent; for he authoritatively directs in that Epistle, that a Bishop, in all places where he may go, should have two Priests with three Deacons waiting upon him to be w nesses of all his ways and doings. The letter alluded to is given by Labbe, (Co Sacros, tom. i., col. 721,) with this title, "Epistola Lucii Papæ I. ad Galliæ atque H paniæ Episcopos;" and this remark in the margin, "Suspecta eodem jure cum a Isidori mercibus." The general heading of the letter begins, "Ut duo Presbyteri tres Diaconi in omni loco Episcopo adhæreant propter testimonium ecclesiasticum," & "Capitul. 1. Ut Episcopus semper testes secum Presbyteros ac Diaconos habeat." T canon itself runs thus:—"Can. 1. Propter tales, fratres hortamur vos, sicut et in h sanctâ ecclesiâ constitutum habemus, ut semper testes vobiscum Sacerdotes et Diacon habeatis. Et licet conscientia sufficere possit propria, tamen propter malevolos ju Apostolum, 'etiam testimonium vos oportet habere bonum ab his qui foris su Quoniam et in hac sancta sede constitutum habemus, ut duo Presbyteri vel tres Di coni in omni loco Episcopum non deserant, propter testimonium ecclesiasticum.'" Th is quoted in Decreti Pars III. De Consecratione, dist. 1: "Jubemus," only the rea ing is, "duo Presbyteri et tres Diaconi." Binius says, in his note on this lett (Labbe, tom. i., col. 726,) "Decernitur ut ad evitanda detractionis et infamiæ pericu propter testimonium ecclesiæ nusquam eant nisi duorum Presbyterorum et trium Diac norum comitatu stipati. Decreti hujus sanciendi calumniæ in Cornelium a Novatia conflctæ causam dedisse videntur. Baronius, anno 257, num. 5." Baronius (lo citato) reads "et *tres* Diaconos," and suggests the origin of the law mentioned Binius. Foxe, the Martyrologist, observes, "I do not deny that this ordinance may and is convenient; yet I see not how the time of Lucius, A.D. 252, could serve for Bishop to carry such a pomp of Priests and Deacons about him, or to study for a such matter; forasmuch as Bishops in those days were seldom free to go abroad, w they never so secret, but either were in house close and secret, or in prison, or else banishment." In the epistle from which we have quoted, we cannot fail to notice w what pride and hauteur Lucius is made to speak of the church of Rome. "This h and apostolical church of Rome," saith he, "the mother of all churches of Chr through the grace of God omnipotent, hath never been proved to swerve out of the p of apostolical tradition, neither hath ever been depraved and degraded with hereti innovations; but even as, in the beginning, she received the rule of the apostolical fa from its first teachers, the Princes of the Apostles, so she continueth ever immacul and undefiled unto the end." Unto this Lucius also is referred, in the decrees of G tian, this Constitution, that no Minister whatsoever, after his ordination, should at time re-enter the chamber of his own wife, on pain of losing his ministry in the chu "Si vero post ordinationem suam Ministros contigerit propriæ uxoris invadere cul sacrarii non intrent limina, neque sacrarii portitores fiant, neque altare contingat neque ab offerentibus holocausti oblationem suscipiant, neque ad Domini corporis tionem accedant, neque propinent, neque sine majoris natu autoritate minora ge officia: urceum sanè ad altare vel calicem ne suggerant." (Corp. Juris Canon, A. P Pithœo, et Francisco Pithœo, Decreti I. pars distinct. lxxxi., cap. 19. "Mini Folio, tom. i., p. 100. Coloniæ, 1779.)

ccessor, Lucius; and what displays the clemency of the times in
en a still more striking point of view, is, that he was not long after
called." "But supposing it to be granted that respecting the
olent deaths of both Cornelius and Lucius, not the least shadow
f a doubt can be entertained, still these two examples of Bishops
eing put to death serve rather to prove the moderation than the
ruelty of Gallus; since it is manifest from the epistles addressed by
yprian to each, that no one besides was put to death at Rome.
yprian himself continued at Carthage without any apprehension, nor
as his continuance there by any means a secret to the Magistrates.
either is anything whatever to be found in his epistles, whence
can be made to appear that any Christian was put to death
Africa under Gallus. This persecution, therefore, should seem to
ave amounted merely to the banishment of certain individuals, and
e infliction of minor penalties on others." * Those persons, how-
er, take an unfair and narrow view of the whole business, who
ould confine the number of martyrs to those whose names are
entioned in public documents, or who merely fell victims to the
ecisions of legal tribunals.

Notwithstanding the contemptuous manner in which Mosheim
peaks of the writings of Cyprian, as being a tissue of rhetorical
gure and truthlessness, the Bishop of Carthage had a character to
stain in the presence of most bitter and sanguinary foes; and his
tter to Demetrian was perused by numbers who would rejoice in
aving an opportunity of bringing home to Cyprian a charge of chi-
nery and falsehood: we therefore feel great hesitation in consider-
g the assertion which he makes in his address to be unworthy
credit, regarding the cruelties of this persecution. Numerous
clesiastical historians speak of the atrocities which were perpetrated
on the Christians during this reign, and which terminated not but
ith the life of Gallus,† who did not possess moral courage sufficient

* Mosheim, Commentaries, vol. iii., p. 130.

† "That there might be nothing wanting to complete the miseries of the empire, allus renewed the Decian persecution against the Christians, which had been much ated; resolving, as it were, to imitate his predecessor in nothing but his crimes." chard, Rom. Hist., vol. ii., p. 473. Sixth edit. London, 1719.) "Gallus hic Imrator sanctos viros, pro pace et sanctitate ipsius orantes, profligavit: atque ita cum s (quos in exilium extrusit) preces, quæ pro ipso fiebant, projecit. Lucium etiam iscopum Romanum exilio mulctavit. Edicta imperialia contra Christianos promulga-: quæ quocunque pervenissent, horribilem pestilentiam secus traxerunt: tantæque vitiæ id malum (etiam per aliquot annos) grassatum est, ut magnam partem incolarum hauriret, et loca multa inhabitata relinqueret. Persecutores igitur sinceræ religionis blicas calamitates non doctrinæ sinceræ Evangelii, sed suæ malitiæ (qua verbum Dei sphemant, ejusque confessores persequuntur) adscribant." (Osiand. Epit. Hist. cles., cent. iii., lib. iii., cap. 12. 4to. Tubing., 1692.) "La persécution dont les èques avoient été avertis du ciel, étoit déjà commencée, à l'occasion d'une peste vioite, qui s'étendit en plusieurs parties de l'empire. L'Empereur Hostilien en étoit ort: et comme elle augmentoit, Gallus et son fils Volusien eurent recours à leurs eux, et envoyérent des édits par toutes les provinces, pour ordonner des sacrifices. S. prien fut demandé pour la seconde fois dans le cirque, par les cris du peuple de Carage, pour être exposé à un lion: et on croit que ce fut alors qu'il écrivit le traité de xhortation au martyre." (Fleury, Hist. Eccles., liv. 7. Nismes, 1779.) "Gallus, e successor of the inhuman Decius, continued, during his transient reign of not quite o years, the severities practised by his predecessor." (Gregory, History of the Chrisn Church, chap. ii., p. 112, vol. i. London, 1795.) "Gallus followed the example

to resist the popular cry. The hatred against the original propagators of Christianity was almost universal, and the faithful were persecuted, in nearly every instance, either by the masses of the population, or at their instigation. "We must remember," says a modern writer, "that Christianity began to be preached when the power of the people was at its height; when no philosopher was tolerated who did not flatter them, and no ruler was regarded who did not please them. The third Cæsar only governed the empire. The authority of the Cæsars was founded on the ascendancy which that imperious family had acquired, by placing themselves at the head of the popular or plebeian party of Rome; by depressing and weakening the aristocracy; by complying with all the demands of the masses, providing they were clamorous and persevering; and by ruling in the despotic and cruel manner which is recorded in history, according to the forms of freedom, and by submission to the will of the populace. Tiberius was the jealous Emperor of the hour; and the inflexible tyrant would have spared no subordinate ruler who might have been accused by the people as indifferent to the expression of their caprice. Under this influence Christ himself was crucified. The populace of Jerusalem, instigated by their rulers, demanded his death. When Pilate hesitated to condemn our Lord, and repeatedly endeavoured to save him, because 'he found no fault in him at all,' he did not dare to resist the popular clamour, which threatened to accuse him to Tiberius. The first persecution which overwhelmed the infant church after the ascension did not precede, but follow, the violence of the popular tumult in which Stephen was put to death. The second persecution under Herod Agrippa, in which James, the brother of John, was put to death, was increased in

of Decius in issuing an order for compelling Christians to sacrifice." (Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxvi., vol. ii., p. 342.) "An imperial edict was published, requiring all Roman subjects to sacrifice to the gods." (Neander, Hist. of the Christ. Relig. and Church, vol. i., p. 136. London, 1831.) "Gallus soon began to disturb the peace of the church, though not with the incessant fury of his predecessor. One Hippolytus, a Roman Presbyter, had been seduced into Novatianism; but his mind had not been perverted from the faith and love of Jesus. He was now called on to suffer martyrdom, which he did with courage and fidelity. Either curiosity or a desire of instructive information induced some to ask him, in the last scene of his suffering, whether he still persisted in the communion of Novatian. He delared, in the most explicit terms, that he now saw the affair in a new light, repented of his having encouraged the schism, and died in the communion of the general church." (Milner, Hist. of the Church of Christ, cent. iii., chap. 12.) "Dionysius, in an epistle to Hermamon, makes the following remarks on Gallus:—'But neither did Gallus understand the wickedness of Decius, nor did he foresee what it was that had destroyed him; but he stumbled at the same stone lying before his eyes. For when his reign was advancing prosperously, and his affairs succeeding according to his wishes, he persecuted those holy men who interceded with God for his safety and peace. Hence, together with them, he also persecuted the very prayers that were offered up in his behalf.'" (Euseb. Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 1.) "The successors of Decius, namely, Gallus and his son Volusian, renewed the persecution against the Christians, which seemed to be subsiding." (Idem, ibid.) "And as these edicts were accompanied by public calamities, particularly by a pestilential disease, which spread through many provinces, the Christians had again to undergo much suffering in divers countries." (See Cyprian, Liber ad Demetrianum; Milner, Hist. of the Church, cent. iii., chap. 12.) "For the pagan Priests persuaded the populace that the gods visited the people with so many calamities on account of the Christians." (Mosheim, Eccles. Hist., cent. iii., book i., part i., sect. 5, vol. i., p. 219. Soames's edit. London, 1845.)

severity because the King saw that his cruelty pleased the Jews. The Gospel now began to be preached out of the precincts of Judea to the Gentiles. At Antioch in Pisidia, in the year 45, the Apostles were compelled to flee from the city, because the people were excited against them. The same proceedings took place at Iconium. The Apostle, in all these instances, was assaulted, threatened with stoning in one place, and actually stoned and left for dead in another, solely by the people, without any interference on the part of the Magistrates. At Thyatira, when the multitude rose up against them, in consequence of an act of revenge on the part of certain citizens, the Magistrates beat them, and cast the Apostles, instead of the assailants, into prison. The mere rabble at Thessalonica endangered them, without proof. At Athens, Paul was not persecuted; he was only mocked and derided. In Corinth, after he had been permitted to remain there undisturbed eighteen months, the Magistrate refused to take any cognizance of the insurrection excited by the Jews; and deemed it beneath his notice to interfere in what he considered the squabbles of contending Israelites. His refusal to protect the Apostles encouraged the people to commit some violence, though none of the friends of the Apostle were put to death. At Ephesus a great uproar was made; but was repressed by the moderation of the Magistrates. At Jerusalem, the life of Paul was saved by the interference only of the soldiers. He was tried at the public tribunal, and acquitted; but was left in prison by the Magistrate, to please the Jews. In all these instances, we are presented only with a picture of the incessant tumults which must have occurred in the principal cities of the empire, upon the preaching of Christianity at the beginning. There was one continued persecution. The account which Paul gives, appears to describe best the general contempt in which the Christians were held. They were as those reserved to be a spectacle in some great theatre, in which the whole creation, angels and men, are the spectators, to exhibit before them an endless variety of suffering. The description which is given us of scenes similar to these, by the early apologists and authors who have related the history of the primitive church, renders the so-much-agitated questions, both as to the number of persecutions and the amount of victims, a matter of little importance. The argument in favour of the truth of Christianity, derived from the afflictions of the early Christians, is much more powerful when it is taken from their daily exposure to death and suffering from popular indignation and hatred, than from the greater or less number of victims at any given period, or from the precise quantity of edicts which were issued by a weak, a wicked, or a populace-courting Emperor. We shall find that nearly all the heathen persecutions either originated in, or were supported by, the indignation, or hatred, or contempt of the mass of the people."*

The reign of Gallus was now nearly ended; and in the brief space of about four years, we have seen two Princes successively and recklessly wasting the church of God, and both of them brought to an

* Townsend, Ecclesiastical and Civil History philosophically compared, vol. i., pp. 125—128. London, 1847.

untimely death. With regard to the Roman empire, while subject to the sway of Gallus, it was in a disastrous state, owing to the loss of several provinces which fell into the hands of foreign foes, who were perpetually making inroads on the country. The Emperor could only boast of one extensive victory over the Goths, which was gained by Æmilian, his General; but so far from being an advantage to Gallus, it ultimately led to his destruction, inasmuch as the former became so popular in the army, and the latter so despicable, that the soldiery, induced by the donatives and promises of Æmilian, proclaimed him Emperor. The news of this event speedily roused the astonished Monarch from those luxurious pleasures in which he was indulging, and caused him, with all possible expedition, to make preparations to oppose this dangerous rival. He left Rome in the company of his son and a powerful army, and marched into Mœsia, where he was promptly met by the usurper, who gave him battle: the victory was on the side of Æmilian, who slew both Gallus and Volusian. The murder of these Princes put an end to the civil war, and the Senate gave a legal sanction to the rights of conquest. The letters of Æmilian to that assembly displayed a mixture of moderation and vanity. With apparent sincerity, he proposed to resign the affairs of the civil administration of the empire to their collective wisdom, and that he would be content with the office of their General, and that the time was not far distant when he should triumphantly assert the glory of Rome, and deliver the country from all those hordes of barbarians which at present infested her borders. Four months witnessed the victory and the fall of Æmilian. He vanquished Gallus, and sank under the weight of a competitor more formidable than he. "That unfortunate Prince had sent Valerian, already distinguished by the honourable title of Censor, to bring the legions of Gaul and Germany to his aid. Valerian executed that commission with zeal and fidelity; and, as he arrived too late to save his Sovereign, he resolved to revenge him. The troops of Æmilian, who still lay encamped in the plains of Spoleto, were awed by the sanctity of his character, but much more by the superior strength of his army; and, as they were now become as incapable of personal attachment, as they had always been of constitutional principles, they readily imbrued their hands in the blood of a Prince who so lately had been the object of their partial choice. The guilt was theirs, but the advantage of it was Valerian's, who obtained the possession of the throne by the means indeed of a civil war, but with a degree of innocence singular in that age of revolutions, since he owed neither gratitude nor allegiance to his predecessor, whom he dethroned." *

Valerian was between sixty and seventy years of age when he ascended the throne, not by any popular caprice, or the clamour of the camp, but by the unanimous voice of the Roman empire. Comparative old age greatly unfitted him for the activity of a sceptre: he therefore determined to share the throne with a younger and more active associate. The choice which he made was far from being a

* Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. i., chap. x., p. 431, 8vo. Milman's Edit., London, 1838.

judicious one. Consulting the dictates of affection, rather than the demands of the public weal, he invested with supreme honours his son Gallienus, a dissolute youth, whose vices had only been concealed from public gaze and public opprobrium by the privacy of his station in society. The associated government of Valerian and Gallienus continued about seven years, and the sole administration of the latter, about eight; but the whole period was an uninterrupted career of confusion and calamity. It was by no means discreditable to Christianity, that the commencement of the reign of Valerian, who may be supposed to have examined, with more than ordinary care, its influence on the public morals, was favourable to their cause. Their security was restored, and, for a short time, persecution ceased. The imperial palace abounded with Christians, and the Emperor constantly manifested a strong predilection in their favour. It is also pleasing to find, that this season of tranquillity from persecution was, for a time, a season of unanimity and concord. Dionysius, the Bishop of Alexandria, informs us that all the churches were united upon the question of the lapsed,* and as he mentions only the most distinguished Bishops, we insert their names; namely, Firmilianus, of Cæsarea in Cappadocia; Theoctistus, of Cæsarea in Palestine; Mazabanes, of Jerusalem, or, rather, as it was then called, of Ælia; and Demetrianus, of Antioch. He names also Marinus, Bishop of Tyre; Heliodorus, of Laodicea; and Helenus, of Tarsus: to which he adds, that all the churches in Syria, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Pontus, and Bithynia agreed in the same sentiments. It is generally supposed that the life of Origen was brought to a close at this period. He was in prison at the commencement of the Decian persecution, where he continued until the death of the Emperor in 251. The remaining days of his life appear to have been spent at Tyre. Eusebius speaks of his having written many letters after his release,† none of which have come down to us; and since he is said to have died in the seventieth year of his age, his demise ought to be placed in the year 253 or 254.‡ Dionysius is known to have addressed a letter to him on the subject of martyrdom,§ and it would be pleasing to think

* "Now I wish you to understand, my brother, that all the churches throughout the East, and farther, that were formerly divided, have been united again. All the Bishops, also, are everywhere in harmony, rejoicing exceedingly at the peace which has been established beyond all expectation." (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 5.)

† "But the number and greatness of Origen's sufferings during the persecution, and the nature of his death, when the spirit of darkness drew up his forces, and waged a war with all his arts and power against the man, and assailed particularly beyond all that were assaulted by him; the nature and number of bonds which he endured on account of the doctrine of Christ, and all his torments of body, the sufferings also which he endured under an iron collar, and in the deepest recesses of the prison, when for many days he was extended and stretched to the distance of four holes on the rack, besides the threats of fire, and whatsoever other sufferings inflicted by his enemies he nobly bore; and finally the issue of these sufferings, when the Judge eagerly strove with all his might to protract his life, in order to prolong his sufferings; and what expressions after these he left behind, replete with benefit to those needing consolation;—all this his many epistles detail with no less truth than accuracy." (Idem, ibid., lib. vi. cap. 39.)

‡ Photius mentions a tradition of his having suffered martyrdom at Cæsarea, in the reign of Decius; but it seems certainly to be unfounded. (See Routh, Relig. Sacr., vol. iii., p. 273.)

§ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vi., cap. 46.

that it was sent to him during his sufferings in the Decian persecution.*

In the mean time the Gospel was extending into the regions beyond, especially in Spain and Gaul, and numerous were they who professed to believe with their hearts unto righteousness; but, in the administration of discipline among them, they were in danger of departing from the simplicity of the truth. The question which more seriously perilled the tranquillity and happiness of the church, was that of the baptism of heretics. Into this subject it is foreign to our purpose to enter. We shall therefore only observe, that by no particular law or regulation of the church at large, had it as yet been ascertained after what manner those should be dealt with who might renounce their communion with any of the heretical churches, and come over to those of the catholic faith. A Council was held at Carthage about the year 217,† and another at Iconium in 230,‡ which decided against the validity of all baptism administered by heretics. Dionysius of Alexandria mentions another which was held at Synnas, or Synnada, in Phrygia, on the same subject.§ It seems, however, to have been a practice in the Eastern churches, and, very probably, in the African,‖ to re-baptize all persons who had received their baptism from the hands of heretics. If they had been baptized in the catholic church, and afterwards fell into heresy, they might be readmitted into the fellowship of the faithful, by the simple imposition of hands from the Bishop, without being re-baptized.¶ For a time this contrariety of practice did not prevent the churches maintaining with each other the relations of charity and brotherly love, until the Asiatic Christians, in certain Councils, proceeded to give to the first-mentioned custom the force of an established law, and to decree, that henceforth whosoever came over to the true church, from any heretical congregation, should undergo the ceremony of being baptized anew. As soon as the news of this affair reached Stephen, who had succeeded Lucius in the episcopate of Rome, he was very angry, recognising, as he did, the validity of heretical baptism; and a warm controversy was commenced between him and some of the Asiatic Bishops upon this question, in which Firmilianus, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, and Helenus, Bishop of Tarsus, took part.** Other Prelates joined in an embassy which was sent to Rome; but Stephen would not even admit these Bishops to an interview, nor would he even render to them the common rites of hospitality: he also inter-

* Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxvi.

† Labbe, Concilia Sacrosancta, fol., tom. i., col. 607, Paris, 1671.

‡ Idem, ibid., fol., tom. i., col. 751.

§ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 7: "The Council of Synnada. Held about 230, or, according to some, in 256, upon the subject of Cataphrygian baptism. Baptism received out of the church was declared to be null and void." (Labbe, Concilia Sacrosanc., tom. i., col. 760. See also Landon, Manual of Councils, p. 576.)

‖ Cyprian speaks of many thousand persons having been baptized in Africa, who had come over to the church from heresy. (Epist. lxxiii.) The forty-fifth and forty-sixth of what are called the Apostolical Canons, decidedly enjoin the re-baptizing of heretics; from which Pearson concludes that these two canons were made anterior to the Council of Iconium.

¶ Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 7.

** Idem, ibid., lib. vii., cap. 5.

dicted these Oriental Christians from all communion with himself and the Roman church, without, however, advancing any claim to the right of excluding them from the general church. The threats and anathemas of Stephen were but little regarded.* Cyprian, after having advised with certain of the African Bishops, convened a Council at Carthage, and, in conjunction with the members of that assembly, adopted, by a public act, the opinion of the Asiatics. And, in a second Council convened in the same city, it was again determined that the baptism of no heretical sect whatever possessed any efficacy. Cyprian wrote to Stephen,† and communicated the conclusion at which the Council had arrived. His letter is mild and conciliatory. He does not pretend to be ignorant that the mind of Stephen was made up, and that he would be unwilling to relinquish impressions which he had once imbibed; but he observes that this needs not cause a dissolution of peace and concord. He disclaims any wish to dictate himself; but, at the same time, he asserts the right of every Bishop to make rules for his own church, holding himself responsible to God alone. That Cyprian was sincere in these professions of moderation, may be seen by what he says in a letter written shortly after to Jubaianus,‡ an African Bishop, in which he defends, at some length, his own opinion, but gives to every Prelate the right of acting for himself.§ It is much to be regretted that Stephen did not meet the conciliatory advances of his opponents in the same spirit of charity and forbearance. A letter which he wrote about this period, addressed to the African Bishops, but which has not come down to us, appears to have been very intemperate. He called his opponents perverters of the truth, and traitors to ecclesiastical unity,—expressions which were most unwarranted, when we consider that his own church was absolutely alone in this controversy.‖ Cyprian did not personally reply to the Bishop of Rome; but in somewhat strong terms he alludes to it in his epistles to two of his friends,¶ who had consulted him on this exciting question. The threat of excommunication drew from the Bishop of Carthage that severe remark, that the person who could utter such a denunciation was a friend of the heretics, and not the friend of the Christian.**

In the mean time, Cyprian never lost sight of that which to him

* Opera Cypriani, Firmiliani Episcopi Cæsareæ Cappadociæ ad Cyprianum Epistola lxxiv., p. 125. Ed. Paris, 1836. Firmilianus says plainly that Stephen separated himself from the other churches, and not these churches from him. He calls him a schismatic, inasmuch as he had withdrawn from the unity of the church; and, by allowing the baptisms of heretics, he had shown himself to be worse than all heretics. These are strong expressions to be applied to a Bishop of Rome; but Firmilianus evidently saw no distinction of rank between a Bishop of Italy and a Bishop of Cappadocia. He speaks of his just indignation being excited by the plain and palpable folly of Stephen, who boasted of his episcopal superiority, and of his being the successor of Peter: and, as to the latter pretension, he openly asserts, that many things were done at Rome which were contrary to apostolical authority. (Burton, Lectures.)

† Opera Cypriani, ad Stephanum Papam, epistola lxxi.

‡ Ibid., epistola lxxii., ad Jubaianum, de Hæreticis Baptizandis.

§ Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxvi.

‖ Idem, ibid., lect. xxvi.

¶ Opera Cypriani, epist. lxxii., ad Jubaianum, epist. lxxiii., ad Pompeium.

** "Dat honorem Deo, qui hæreticorum amicus et inimicus Christianorum Sacerdotes Dei veritatem Christi et Ecclesiæ unitatem tuentes abstinendos putat?" (Epist. lxxiii.)

was above all price,—the unity of the church; and although two Councils had unanimously decided on the point at issue, he convened another and more influential Synod, which was numerously attended. Cyprian opened the proceedings of the assembly by calling upon each of the Prelates to state his own opinion, while as a body they judged no one who differed from them, nor thought of excluding them from their communion. In the following passage there is evident allusion to Stephen, the Bishop of Rome:—"For none of us makes himself to be a Bishop of Bishops, or tries tyrannically to frighten his colleagues into the necessity of obeying; since every Bishop, in virtue of his own liberty and power, is master of his own will, and is as incapable of being judged by another, as he is of judging himself: but let us wait for the universal judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone has the power of putting us over the government of his church, and of judging us for our actions." The Council promptly, and with great unanimity, confirmed former decisions. Nevertheless, Stephen, filled with anger, refused to grant an audience to the deputies of the Council; and Cyprian wrote upon the subject to the Bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia. The latter, in his answer, declares twice, that, in his opinion, the Bishop of Rome had entirely broken peace with Africa; and that he did not fear to assert, that Stephen, by the very act of separating all others from his communion, had, in fact, separated himself from all the other faithful, and therefore from the communion of the catholic church; and, by so doing, had really become himself schismatical.* This contest continued in the church until the episcopate of Xystus, or Sixtus, who succeeded Stephen; and it seems the Bishops of Africa, little by little, yielded their opinion.

* By most of the Roman Catholic writers, the history of this controversy between Stephen, Bishop of Rome, and certain Asiatic and African Prelates, respecting the validity or efficacy of baptism administered by heretics, has been studiously, and to the utmost extent of their ability, corrupted and involved in obscurity. For since we are supplied by this history, in its unadulterated state, with evidence, of the most incontrovertible nature, that the power of the Bishop of Rome, although he certainly held a distinguished rank among the Christian Prelates, was at this period of very limited extent, and that his decrees were with the utmost freedom spurned at and rejected, the writers above alluded to make it their business, as far as possible, to jumble all things together, and partly by the introduction of silly conjectures, and partly by forced interpretations of passages in ancient authors, involve the whole in indistinctness and confusion, lest, as is abundantly manifest, the truth should happen too clearly to reveal itself, and take possession of our minds. One of these writers, indeed, on perceiving that, by arts and tricks like the above, the truth might to a certain extent be disguised, but could not by any means be wholly extinguished or obliterated, appears to have come to the resolution of imitating the example of Alexander, by at once cutting through this Gordian knot, which he found to surpass the skill of himself or any other advocate of the unjust pretensions of the Romish see to unravel; and he accordingly obliterates, as it were with a sponge, all the most valuable and important documents respecting this controversy that have reached our days. The author to whom I allude is Ramond Missorius, a brother of the Franciscan order, who, in a particular tract on the subject, published by him at Venice, 1733, 4to., would fain make it appear that the epistles of Firmilian and Cyprian, in which the decree of Stephen is so roughly handled, as well as certain other documents relating to this controversy, are nothing better than forgeries trumped up by the Donatists of Africa. This almost incredible act of temerity, however, met with its justly merited exposure and reproof, not only in a dissertation from the pen of the Protestant writer, Jo. Geo. Walch, published at Jena, in 1738, but also in a very learned work by a Roman Catholic author, Jo. Henr. Sbaralea, printed at Bologna, in 1741, 4to. (Mosheim, Commentaries.)

Jerome says, that many of the same Bishops who had declared in Council the invalidity of heretical baptism, afterwards concurred in a contrary decree: an end, in part, however, was put to the dispute by the breaking out of the persecution anew under Valerian.

This event speedily was realized. Valerian had favoured the Christians before his accession to the empire, and continued to do so for the first four years of his reign. He is reported to have been more indulgent to them than any former Emperor. Dionysius, adverting to his character, in a letter to Hermamon, observes, "It was revealed to John: 'And there was a mouth given, speaking great things, and blasphemy; and power was given to him (to continue) forty-two months.' It is wonderful that both these things were fulfilled in Valerian; and if we consider the behaviour of the man before this, how kind and friendly he was to the pious. For never had any of the Emperors before him been so favourably and benevolently disposed toward them. All his house was likewise filled with good people, and was indeed a church of the Lord." * The change which took place in the sentiments and conduct of Valerian, is attributed to the influence of a man deeply versed in magical arts. The Emperor was enslaved by a superstition which the older Romans would have beheld with little less abhorrence than Christianity itself. "It must be admitted, that Christian superstition was too much inclined to encroach upon the province of Oriental magic; and the more the older polytheism decayed, the more closely it allied itself with this powerful agent in commanding the fears of man. The adepts in those dark and forbidden sciences were probably more influential opponents of Christianity with all classes, from the Emperor, who employed their mystic arts to inquire into the secrets of futurity, to the peasant, who shuddered at their power, than the ancient and established priesthood." †

The author of the change which took place in the conduct of Valerian was one Macrianus,‡ one of his most intimate friends; a person of considerable reputation and dignity, but extremely bigoted and superstitious, and remarkable for paying much attention to magicians and astrologers. These men, who came chiefly from Egypt, gained an influence with Macrianus, by promising him the empire; and it was to please them, in return, that he persuaded the Emperor to persecute the Christians. The latter were incessantly active in attacking and exposing the tricks and abominations which formed part of the science of magic; and hence they raised against themselves a numerous body, which was always glad to see the Christians persecuted. The Quinquennalia, or fifth anniversary of the Emperor's

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 10.

† Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 246.

‡ Macrianus, otherwise called Macrinus, was at once a fanatic, intoxicated with the magical superstitions of Egypt, and a selfish, unprincipled politician. He, who represented the Christians to be enemies of the state, took up arms himself against Gallienus, the son of his benefactor, and sought to invest his own children with the imperial purple. In this attempt they all perished by the hands of other usurpers. (Zonaras, lib. xii., cap. 24; Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 23, where Dionysius of Alexandria elegantly records the actions and the fate of Macrianus.) (Dalrymple.)

accession, would furnish an opportunity for these cruelties; and there is reason to think that they began in the capital.* Be that as it may, Macrianus obtained such complete mastery over the mind of Valerian, as to engage in the guilty mysteries of magic, and to trace the fate of the empire in the entrails of human victims.† There does not appear, at the commencement of the persecution, to have been any positive edict issued by the Emperor. This attack upon the church of Christ was at first by no means a sanguinary one, and only required the removal of teachers and Pastors, and especially Bishops, from their flocks. We have already directed attention to the idea which in the former persecution prevailed among the heathen Governors, that if they could first remove the Prelates out of the way, they should have less difficulty in strangling Christianity; and so the assembling of the congregations was forbidden, and it was hoped that thus their aim might be attained without blood-shedding. Capital punishment was not awarded at first even to the Bishops and Presbyters, but merely banishment; and the full penalty of the law was reserved for those who might persist in holding religious congregations, or in continuing to frequent them. The Emperor was not long in discovering that nothing could be accomplished by these measures. The local and temporary separation of the Bishops could not dissolve their connexion with the churches: by letters, by the Clergy travelling backwards and forwards, they were active among their people, as if they had been in the midst of them; and their exile only rendered them dearer to their flocks. Wherever they were banished, congregations were collected; and where no sound of the Gospel had been heard, the "word of this salvation" was proclaimed.

Stephen, the Bishop of Rome, is supposed by many to have been one of the earliest victims; but no authentic record of his martyrdom is extant.‡ The African Christians had for some time witnessed the

* Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist., lect. xxvi., p. 360.

† Macrianus, says Dionysius, persuaded Valerian to alter his mode of conduct with regard to the Christians, and "to persecute and slay these pure and holy men, as enemies and obstacles to their wicked and detestable incantations; for there were, and still are, men who, by their very presence, their aspect, their breath, their voice, are able to dissipate the artifices of wicked demons. He suggested to him to study the rites of initiation, and abominable arts of sorcery; to perform execrable sacrifices, to slay unhappy infants, and to sacrifice the children of wretched fathers, and to search the bowels of new-born babes, and to mutilate and dismember the creatures of God; as if by doing this they should obtain great felicity." (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 10.)

‡ Platina, as translated by Sir Paul Rycaut, says, "Stephen, when he had by his example and persuasion converted a multitude of Gentiles to Christianity, being seized, as some say, by Gallienus, or, according to others, by those who upon the edict of Decius were appointed to persecute the Christians,—he, with many others, was hurried away to martyrdom; and, having suffered, was interred in the cemetery of Callistus, in the Via Appia." (Lives of the Popes, fol., p. 38.) Another writer informs us, that "he died on the 2d of August, 257, according to the most probable opinion. The Church of Rome, upon the authority of his Acts, ranks him among the martyrs; but that honour is not paid him either by Augustine or by Vincentius Lirinensis, who, naming him together with Cyprian, as they often do, give constantly the title of martyr to the latter, and never to the former. As for his Acts, they flatly contradict, in several points, the most unexceptionable writers among the ancients, and therefore by no means deserve the credit which Baronius would have us give them. Even Anastasius seems to have made no

gathering storm, and intelligence of what was going forward in the imperial city would quickly be communicated to the provinces. Fortunatus, an African Bishop, besought Cyprian to furnish the churches which were most exposed to the assaults of the powers of darkness, with some exhortations on the subject of martyrdom, which might fortify the mind, and prepare it for the suffering hour. He was the first who was called to put his principles in practice. By the end of August, in the year 257, a message had come from the Emperor to the Proconsul Paternus, in which it was ordered that all persons should adopt the religious ceremonies of Rome. Bishops and Presbyters were specially mentioned, and the punishment of exile was appointed for those who disobeyed. It was also added, that private meetings should not be held, and that no person should enter the catacombs. The directions were evidently given by some person who was well acquainted with the manners of the Christians. Paternus summoned Cyprian to his tribunal, to whom he said, "The Emperors Valerian and Gallienus have sent me a rescript, in which they command, that all those who do not observe the Roman religion shall now take upon them the Roman ceremonies. I therefore ask, What are you? What do you answer?" Cyprian replied, "I am a Christian, and a Bishop: I know no God but the one true God, who created the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and all that is in them. This God we Christians serve; to this God we pray day and night for ourselves, for all mankind, and for the prosperity of the Emperor himself." "Is this, then," the Proconsul said, "your fixed resolution?" Cyprian replied, "It is: a good resolution, which proceeds from the knowledge of God, can never change." On this, Paternus, in compliance with the imperial edict, pronounced a sentence of banishment upon him, and added, instantly, "This rescript relates not only to the Bishops, but also to the Priests. I desire, therefore, to know from you, who the Presbyters are who dwell in this city?" Cyprian replied, "Your laws have justly condemned the laying of informations;* I cannot, therefore, give them up; but in the places over which they have authority, you will be able to find them." The Proconsul said, "I am speaking now of this place; and in this place, this very day, will I begin the search." Cyprian answered, "As our doctrine forbids men to give themselves

account of them, if in his time they were yet composed, which may be questioned; for the account which he gives of Stephen's death differs widely from that which we read in those Acts. But he had made a bold attempt towards extending the power and authority of the see of Rome, and therefore was to be placed among the saints for the encouragement of others. To say that he had merited that honour by his virtues, either as a Christian or a Bishop, had been carrying the imposture too far: the only means, therefore, left of making him a saint, was to make him a martyr, that by his glorious death he might be thought to have deserved what it was manifest from the records of those times, he had not deserved by his Christian life. Hence Acts were forged, setting forth his heroic confession of the faith before the Emperor, his sufferings on that account, the stupendous miracles he wrought, &c.; which, however incredible, might, in process of time, by their antiquity alone, gain credit with the greater part of mankind." (Bower, "History of the Popes," vol. i., pp. 71, 72, 4to.)

* See Sueton., Titus, cap. viii.; Domitianus, cap. ix.; Plin., Paneg. ad Trajanum, lib. ii., Dig. de jure Fici.; Lamprid. Commodus, p. 52, edit. Salmas.

up,* and it is also contrary to your orders, therefore they cannot give themselves up; but if you seek them, you will find them." Paternus released him with a declaration, that the assembling of the Christians, be it where it might, and the visiting Christian places of interment, (which usually inflamed the zeal of Christians,) were forbidden under pain of death. The intention was now wholly to separate the Bishops from their churches; but the bond of the Spirit would not suffer itself to be broken by earthly power. We very soon after find the Bishops and the Clergy, and not only these, but laymen also, and even women and children, condemned, after being ill-treated and beaten, to imprisonment and labour in the mines. We suppose they had been found at the graves, or in congregations. The Bishop, Cyprian, from Curubis,† the place of his banishment, was most active in providing for their temporal and spiritual wants, and in proving, by words and deeds, his sympathy with them. While he sent large sums from his own revenues, and from the church-chest, for their support, and the relief of their distresses, he wrote as follows to them:‡—"In the mines the body is not refreshed by bed and couches, but the refreshment and the consolation of Christ. The limbs, weary through labour, lie upon the earth; but it is no punishment to lie there with Christ. Though the outward man be covered with filth, yet the inward man is the more purified by the Spirit of God. There is but little bread; but 'man lives not by bread alone, but by the word of God.' There is but little clothing for the cold; but he who has put on Christ hath clothing and ornament enough. Even in this, my dearest brethren, your faith can receive no injury,—that you are unable to celebrate the communion. You do celebrate the most glorious communion, you do bring the most costly offering; for the Scripture says, 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' You bring yourselves as holy and pure offerings to God. Your example," he writes to the Clergy, "the greater part of the

* Voluntary appearance before the judgment-seat was repudiated by the early church. (Matt. x. 23.) "That the poor hunted Christians should take to cover," was the precept of their heavenly Master, and it was religiously observed by the sober Christians of the primitive ages. Some, indeed, of warm imaginations, and filled with self-confidence, chose to be more zealous in the service of their Lord than he himself required, and they encountered *that* persecution which he had counselled them to shun. The consequences early felt in the Christian church, are well described in the epistle from the brethren at Smyrna. Concerning this subject there are some strange and crude observations to be found in the writings of eminent persons of recent date. It was a maxim of Cyprian, "Dominus nos *confiteri* magis voluit, quam *profiteri*." (Epist. lxxxii., ad Clerum.) The progress of Christianity was remarkably rapid, and hence one great argument for the divinity of its origin; yet probably the progress of Christianity would have been more rapid, and the argument thence arising would have been more illustrious, had the persecuted Christians always observed the precept which our Lord gave them. (Dalrymple.)

† Curubis, a city about ten or twelve leagues from Carthage. (Dupin.) "Locus exilio destinatus erat Curubis, ut testantur Pontius, Acta passionis, et Augustinus: erat autem Curubis in Zeugitana provincia sub jurisdictione proconsulis posita." (Pagius in Baron. Annal. Eccles., an. 260, sect. xxxiii.; also Tillemont, Mem. Eccles., tom. iv., art. liv., p. 168. 4to. Paris, 1696.)

‡ Opera Cypriani, Epist. lxxvi., ad Nemesianum et cœteros martyras in metallo constitutos, p. 139. 8vo. edit. Paris, 1836.

church has followed, who have confessed with you, and with you have been crowned, being bound to you by the ties of the strongest love, so that prison and the mines could not separate them from you; and there are among you girls and boys. How great now among you must be the strength of your victorious conscience! What a triumph in your hearts, to walk among the mines with imprisoned body, but with a heart conscious of power to know that Christ is among you, and delights himself in the patience of his servants, who tread in his footsteps, and walk in his ways to the kingdom of eternity!" *

Among those who suffered martyrdom for the sake of the truth, we must not omit Saturninus, Bishop of Toulouse, whom the Gallican church represents as one of the most illustrious sufferers their kingdom can boast of; and assures us that his history has been composed with great care, and attention to accuracy. It appears that Christianity had made but little progress in Gaul, and had endured much from the persecutions of the times, and also from the great scarcity of the Ministers of the Gospel in that country. On this account, Fabian, Bishop of Rome, set apart Saturninus, and other six individuals, to act as Prelates, and sent them into that country to preach Christ and him crucified. Each of them chose the place of his residence; and Saturninus fixed upon Toulouse, with the view of attempting the conversion of its inhabitants, and those of the adjacent parts. His success is said to have been great. The congregation assembled in some proseucha within the suburbs of the city, between which and the residence of Saturninus, stood the principal heathen temple in Toulouse, where the Priests pretended to predict future events. The oracle, however, was frequently silent when the Bishop passed by; so that it shortly became tardy in delivering the anticipated responses, and ultimately mute. It was now that the frauds of the pretended deities were not only detected and defeated, but positively exploded, to the no small chagrin and discomfiture of the chief actors. Surprised and confounded at the disgraceful silence of their deities, the principal persons among the idolaters inquired into the cause; and were immediately informed, by the enemies of the Gospel, that a new sect had recently arisen among them, whose chief object was the utter extermination of the ancient faith; and that Saturninus, a Bishop of that impious company, constantly passing their hallowed edifice, had awed the gods to silence. A confession like this, we should have thought, would have produced such a change in the pagan population around, that they would have renounced their idolatry, and have exercised their confidence and faith in a Being who has declared, that "the idols he shall utterly abolish." Instead of which, so great was their infatuation, that they proposed killing the Prelate, as the most certain and expeditious way of unloosing the stammering and silent tongue of the oracle. While the Priests and people were engaged in these consultations, they discerned the Bishop as usual passing the temple, on his way to the Christian place of worship; when, full of ignorant zeal, and anxious to maintain the

* Neander, History of the Christian Religion and Church, vol. i., pp. 137—139.

honour of their gods, they immediately resolved not to lose this favourable opportunity of carrying their sanguinary designs into practice. He was forthwith seized, and dragged into the temple; and was told, that he must either appease the offended deities by offering sacrifice, or expiate the crime with his blood. Saturninus boldly replied, "I adore one only God, and to Him I am ready to offer a sacrifice of praise. Your gods are devils, and are more delighted with the sacrifice of your souls, than with that of your bullocks. How can I fear them, who, as you acknowledge, tremble in the presence of a Christian?" Irritated with this answer, the Heathen maltreated the holy man with all the rage and barbarity which the most infuriated zeal in defence of their insulted deities could inspire; and, after inflicting a variety of indignities upon him, they tied his feet to a wild bull which was brought there to be sacrificed, which, being driven from the temple, ran violently down the steps, and fractured the Bishop's skull, and scattered the brains. The martyr's soul was soon released from "the earthly house of this tabernacle," and fled to the kingdom of everlasting peace and joy. The infuriated animal continued to drag the remains of the martyr, scattering his limbs and blood on every side, until the cord which bound him breaking, the trunk was left in the plain without the gates of the city. The feeble condition of the church at Toulouse prevented the Christians carrying away the dead body of Saturninus, which was, at length, by two women, deposited in a deep ditch to secure it from further insult. This martyrdom took place in 257.*

Rufina and Secunda were sisters, and the daughters of Asterius, a man of a senatorian family in Rome. Rufina, the elder, was betrothed to Armentarius, a young man of noble extraction; and Secunda was also engaged to Verinus, an individual of equal rank and fortune to the former. The two gentlemen were Christians. When the persecution arose, both renounced the faith, and also endeavoured to induce the young women to follow their example; but being too well grounded in the truth as it is in Jesus, and too well supported by the grace of God, to listen to their advice, and diffident of their own strength, they fled from Rome to avoid farther solicitation. Armentarius and Verinus, finding all their efforts to cause them to apostatize from the truth ineffectual and vain, informed against them as being Christians. This base and cowardly act was hailed by the Pagans with great joy. They were pursued, and brought back to the city; were brought before Junius Donatus, Prefect of Rome, by whom, after having endured numerous torments, they were condemned to be beheaded. They were conducted twelve miles out of Rome, and executed in a forest on the Aurelian Way, where also they were buried.†

* See Surius De Probatis Sanctorum, tom. vi., fol., 1575; Tillemont, Mem. Ecclesiast., tom. iii., p. 297, 4to., Paris, 1695; Calmet, Hist. de Lorraine, liv. iii., p. 130; Rivet., Hist. Liter. de la France, tom. i., p. 306; Moreri, Le Grand Dict., *in loco*.

† Alban Butler says, this forest, at the period of the martyrdom of these two girls, was called the "Black Forest," *Sylva Nigra*; but from these martyrs this name was changed into that of *Sylva Candida*, or the "White Forest."

It was in the spring of 258, and while Valerian was busily engaged in military preparations for the Persian expedition, that Dionysius was brought before the Prefect of Egypt, and ordered to recant for his own good, and for the benefit of others. Dionysius was a native of Alexandria, where his parents appear to have been persons of considerable note; his father, and probably his ancestors, filled honourable offices, and possessed considerable influence in the city. He was born and educated a Gentile; but by what means he was converted to Christianity we know not. Having passed through his juvenile studies, he placed himself under the tutelage of Origen, who was at that time the preceptor of the Alexandrian school, and renowned for his philosophic and Christian lectures. On the decease of Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, Heraclas, a scholar of Origen, and his successor in the catechetic school, was elevated to the see, and Dionysius advanced to the place; and upon the death of Heraclas, who filled the episcopal chair fifteen years, none was considered so qualified to succeed him as Dionysius, who accordingly entered upon the duties and responsibilities of the situation in 246. The first years of his office, as Prelate of Alexandria, were, on the whole, tranquil, until Decius seized the reins of government, and then all was uncertainty and confusion. The Christians were persecuted with unceasing severity, of which the church in Alexandria shared deeply. Persons of every age, quality, and profession were accused, summoned, dragged, tortured, and executed with all imaginable rigour, multitudes of whom Dionysius records, together with the manner of their martyrdom. Vast numbers who fled for shelter to the woods and mountains, met with a worse death than that which they sought to avoid at home, being famished with hunger and thirst, starved with cold, overrun with disease, surprised by thieves, worried by wild beasts; and many were captured by the Arabs and Saracens, who reduced them to a state of slavery more miserable than death itself. In this time of trouble and rebuke many revolted from the faith; others, however, maintained their position with unflinching courage; and several who until that moment had been not only strangers, but enemies, to the Christian religion, came forward and professed themselves Christians, in open defiance of those immediate dangers which inevitably accompanied such a declaration.

Dionysius bore a part in the common tragedy, although God was pleased to throw around him the shield of divine protection for the future good of the church. The following account is recorded by Eusebius,* from whom Dr. Cave quotes largely. No sooner had the Prefect received the imperial orders, than he immediately despatched a *Frumentarius*,† or military officer,—whose duty it was

* Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vi., cap. 40.

† Frumentarii were officers under the Roman empire, who acted as spies in the provinces, and reported to the Emperors anything which they considered of importance. They appear to have been called *Frumentarii*, because it was their duty to collect information in the same way as it was the duty of other officers, called by the same name, to collect corn. They were accustomed to accuse persons falsely; and their

to seize delinquents, and inquire into seditious reports and practices against the state, and therefore more especially pertained to Judges and Governors of provinces,—to apprehend him. This official went about, and narrowly ransacked every corner, searching every place where he imagined he might hide himself; but in the meantime he never examined the house of Dionysius, concluding that he would not dare to continue at home: nevertheless he remained there not less than four days, hourly expecting the arrival of the officers. At length he left his habitation, accompanied by some friends, and his servants. Not long after, he fell into the hands of his pursuers, and, having received his sentence, he was conducted by a guard, under the command of a Centurion, to Taposiris, a small town between Alexandria and Canopus, there probably to be put to death in as quiet a way as possible. It happened, however, that Timotheus, one of the friends of the Bishop, ignorant of his apprehension, came to the house where he had resided, and finding it empty, and a military guard at the door, fled after him in great amazement and terror. Meeting a countryman on the road, he was asked why he made such haste: Timotheus, supposing that he was no stranger to the affair, gave him a broken and imperfect relation of the whole. The man was going to some nuptial festival which, according to the custom of the country, was protracted to a very late hour, and, entering the house, informed the company what he had heard. In a state of inebriation, and elevated with mirth, they rose up, ran out of doors, and, with great clamour, rushed toward the place where Dionysius was confined. The guard, hearing such noise and confusion at that unseemly hour of night, left their prisoner, and ingloriously ran away: the drunken party, on entering, found the Bishop in bed. The good man, supposing his nocturnal visitants to be thieves, was reaching something to give them: they, however, commanded him to rise and follow them. At last, discerning the errand upon which they had come, he requested them to dismiss him, and then depart; or at least to be so kind to him, as to assume the office of the executioner, and take off his head. While he was passionately entreating them so to do, they compelled him to rise, and, having thrown himself on the ground, they dragged him out of his prison by the hands and feet, and then returned to their midnight revels. This tragi-comic scene being ended, Caius and Faustus, Peter and Paul, Presbyters, and his fellow-prisoners, took him up, placed him upon an ass, and conveyed him away into a desolate part of the wilds of Libya, where he, together with Peter and Caius, lay concealed until the storm was overpast.*

At the death of Decius, Dionysius returned to Alexandria, where

office was at length abolished by Diocletian. They were succeeded in later times by the *agentes rerum*. We frequently find in inscriptions mention made of the *Frumentarii* belonging to particular legions; from which it has been supposed that the *Frumentarii*, who acted as spies, were soldiers attached to the legions in the provinces: they may, however, have been different officers, whose duty it was to distribute corn to the troops.

* Cave's Lives of the Fathers, vol. i., p. 422. Carey edit., 8vo. Oxford, 1840.

he was constantly employed in the affairs of his diocess,* until the onslaught on the church under the auspices of Valerian took place. The edict of the Emperor was everywhere read, and the Christians, without any protection, were exposed to the common rage. The Alexandrian Bishop, attended by some of his own Clergy, and by some Christians lately arrived from Rome, was brought before Æmilian, the Prefect of Egypt. The Governor did not at first peremptorily forbid him to hold their religious assemblies, but endeavoured to persuade him to leave off that mode of worship, presuming that others would speedily follow his example. The answer which the Bishop returned was apostolical and terse, that "we must obey God rather than men;" boldly assuring him that he would worship the true God, and none but Him; from this resolution he would not swerve, nor ever cease to be a Christian. The Prefect then told them, that both by word and writing he had already informed them of the great clemency of the Emperor, who permitted them to be safe, if they would adore the gods of the empire that were the protectors of it. The Bishop replied, that every one worshipped those whom they thought to be gods; that, as for themselves, they adored and served that ONE God, who is the Creator of the world, and who gave government to the Emperor, for whom they offered daily prayer that his dominion might be permanent and prosperous. To this Æmilian rejoined, that if He were a Deity, none prevented them from worshipping Him together with them which in the estimation of the Romans were truly gods, they being enjoined to worship, not merely one object of adoration, but emphatically the gods, and those whom all men acknowledged to be such. Dionysius answered, "We cannot worship any other." "I see," replied the Prefect, "that you are a company of foolish and ungrateful people, and not sensible of the favour of our Lords the Emperors; wherefore you shall stay no longer in this city, but be sent to Cephro, in the parts of Libya; for thither, according to the Emperor's command, I resolve to banish you. Nor shall either you, or any of your sect, have leave to keep your meetings, or to frequent your cemeteries; which if any dare to

* It was about this time that Sabellius flourished, who is said to have been a disciple of Noetus, and to have held the rank either of a Bishop or a Presbyter. It is perhaps needless to mention that these heretics denied the personality of the Son and the Holy Ghost. They believed that God the Father was himself the Redeemer and Sanctifier of mankind; that the divinity of the Father resided in Jesus Christ, who had no separate existence before his appearance upon earth; and that the Son and the Holy Ghost are mere modes, or operations, of the one only God. If we seek for a difference between the theory of Sabellius, and those of his predecessors, we are perhaps to say, that Noetus supposed the whole divinity of the Father to be inherent in Jesus Christ, whereas Sabellius supposed it to be only a part, which was put forth like an emanation, and was again absorbed in the Deity. Noetus acknowledged only one divine Person: Sabellius divided this one divinity into three; but he supposed the Son and the Holy Ghost to have no distinct personal existence, except when they were put forth for a time by the Father. (Burton, Bamp. Lect., note 103.) These opinions spread rapidly in that part of the Alexandrian diocess, which is called Pentapolis. (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 6.) Dionysius soon heard of it; and, after some letters had passed on the subject, he had the question discussed in his presence. (Burton, Lect. on Eccles. Hist.)

attempt, it shall be at his peril, and he shall be punished suitably to his crime. Begone, therefore, to the place allotted you."

This sentence was put into operation with promptitude and despatch: Dionysius, though sick, was not allowed one day's respite, either to recover his health, or prepare for the journey. When he came to know more of the locality of his exile, he was troubled, knowing it to be a place destitute of the society of good men, and constantly exposed to the inroads of the lawless and unreasonable: this uneasiness was in some degree alleviated, when he was informed that it was contiguous to a large and populous city, whose neighbourhood would furnish him with individuals both for conversation, and opportunity for conversion. Cephro was the most rude and barbarous tract of the Libyan desert; and Colythius,* that particular part to which Dionysius was afterward sent, was peculiarly so. Thither was the Bishop of Alexandria banished, and was followed by a great number of Christians from the city itself, and from other parts of Egypt. At his first arrival, he was met with brutal rudeness from the natives, and with showers of stones; but he had not been long there, before a moral reformation was effected; their barbarous manners were not only civilized, but many were led to renounce idolatry, and to embrace the faith of Christ. Notwithstanding the threats of Æmilian, the Christians continued to assemble at Alexandria, though the peril was so great, and the Prefect proceeded with rigour against all who were brought before him: many expired under the most cruel torments; many were laden with heavy fetters, and thrust into noisome dungeons;† but the time was gone by when the meetings of Christians could be hindered by an edict; they might be banished, and put to death; but the progress of the Gospel could not be restrained. Before the appearance of Dionysius at Cephro, the truth was unknown; but heathen malice conveyed it to that unfrequented spot, and a numerous church was formed. On hearing of this fact, Æmilian was induced to separate his prisoners, and remove them to still more unpleasant quarters. They dispersed through different divisions of the Mareotic district, and the place to which our Bishop was ultimately sent was nearer Alexandria than Cephro, and seems to have been chosen that the persons confined there might be more within reach of the Governor. His residence in this place appears to have continued for some time: he probably returned to Alexandria when Gallienus issued his rescript in favour of the Christians. A little before his death, he defended the divinity of Christ against Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch, a man infamous both for his abominable heresies and intolerable haughtiness, his vanity, avarice, extortions, and other crimes; so that his evil course of life caused him to lose sight of the truth. Dionysius being invited to the Synod‡ that was held at Antioch against this heretic, in 264; and,

* Nicephor., Callist., lib. vi., cap. x., tom. i., folio, p. 402. Paris, 1630.

† Cave, Lives of the Fathers, vol. i., p. 428. 8vo. edit. Oxford, 1840.

‡ Paul of Samosata taught, as Sabellius had done in 255, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit were but one Person; that the Word and the Spirit were in

not being able to go thither, by reason of age and infirmity, wrote several letters to the church of Antioch, wherein he refuted the heresiarch's errors, but would not condescend to salute him. Toward the close of the year 265 he died at Alexandria, after he had governed that church with wisdom and sanctity seventeen years.

Valerian having given the title of Augustus to his son Gallienus soon after his own accession to the empire, the names of both consequently appear in public documents, and both of them gave authority for the persecution in 257. He left Rome on his Persian expedition in 258. He appears at Byzantium and at Antioch in that year; and it is well known that, while he was engaged in this war, the whole management of the empire was committed to Macrianus. It is therefore reasonable to imagine, that the persecution of the church would be conducted with greater zeal and severity, during the absence of the Emperor in the East, than when he was at Rome. Gallienus, also, was at this period combating the barbarians in Scythia; and, it is probable, knew little or nothing of the edicts to which his name, with that of his father, was affixed. It must also be known that Macrianus accompanied Valerian into Persia, and, being aware of the influence which he had over the Emperor, he was enabled to send home a far more sanguinary order against the Christians than had yet been issued. From what Valerian had already witnessed of the effects of the persecution, he must have seen that, in order to suppress Christianity, he must resort to more decided and severe measures. Accustomed as the Christians had been, under former Emperors, to sufferings of a much more heavy and afflictive nature, this comparatively lenient course, confined, in many instances, to banishment, and forbidding public assemblies and visits to the catacombs,* instead of filling their

the Father, without a real and personal existence, and merely as reason is in man; so that, in fact, there was neither Father, nor Son, nor Holy Spirit, but simply one God. Nevertheless he acknowledged that the Father produced the Word; but only in order that He might operate out of himself; in which he differed from Sabellius. His error upon the subject of the incarnation was equally fatal: he would not allow that the Son of God came down from heaven; he maintained that Jesus Christ was of the earth, a mere man, having by nature nothing above other men: he confessed that the word, wisdom, and eternal light were in Him; but only as dwelling in Him, not by a personal union. Hence he recognised in Jesus Christ two *υποστασεις*, two Persons, two Christs, two Sons, one of whom was the Son of God by nature, and co-eternal with the Father, being no other, according to his showing, than the Father himself; whilst the other, who was the son of David, and the son of the Virgin Mary, was Christ only in an improper sense, having had no existence before the birth of the Virgin, and being called the Son of God only because he was the abode of the true Son. So that Jesus Christ was righteous, not because righteousness was an attribute essential to him as God, but merely by the *practice* of virtue and righteousness; not by his *union*, but by his communication, with the divine Word. Two Councils were held on the subject, and Paul was, in the end, convicted of all his errors; and especially of holding that Jesus Christ was merely man: he was unanimously deposed and excommunicated; which judgment of the Council was further received and confirmed by all the Bishops of the whole church, the decree of the Council having been received everywhere. (Euseb., Eccles. Hist., lib. vii., cap. 28; Labbe, Concilia Sacrosancta, tom. i., pp. 843, 893, 901.)

* Instances are not unfrequently adduced by learned men, as proof that the first rescript issued by Valerian and his son was of a more cruel character than we have represented it to have been; and that not only Bishops and Presbyters, but Christians of every order and sex, were made by it the objects of severe punishment. But the cruelties

minds with dismay, was found to stimulate their zeal, and add fresh vigour to their constancy. Valerian, therefore, from the camp issued the following edict:—"The Bishops, Priests, and Deacons shall immediately be put to death by the sword. The Senators and Knights shall lose their dignities and property; and if, after this, they remain Christians, they shall suffer the same punishment of death. Women of condition, after confiscation of their property, shall be banished. The Christians in the service of the imperial court, especially slaves and freed-men, who have formerly made profession of Christianity, or do so now, shall be considered as the property of the Emperor, and shall be distributed in chains to labour in the various imperial public works."* This rescript appears to have reached Rome in the middle of summer; and the Magistrates and the people showed no reluctance to carry it into full operation. Confiscations and deaths now became frequent. It is evident, also, that the Emperor's chief object was to deprive the Christians of their Clergy,

thus exercised may, without attributing to this edict any greater severity than we have assigned to it, be very sufficiently accounted for from the orders given at its conclusion; for it is there in express terms declared, that capital punishment should thenceforward await all those who should give their attendance at the Christian meetings, or be found in the cemeteries or burial-places. There can be no doubt, therefore, but that all those, as well Bishops as others, who were either put to death, or beaten with clubs, or imprisoned, or subjected to any other kind of punishment of a more afflictive description than that of banishment, drew as it were these severities upon themselves, by persisting in holding meetings, contrary to the expressed will of the Emperor, and their being found in the cemeteries. Such, in fact, was the courage of the Christians of those times, that numbers made no scruple of setting the imperial mandate wholly at defiance. The Proconsul of Africa had, without doubt, apprehended a great multitude of Christians of both sexes and of all descriptions, whom he had met with assembled together for the purpose of divine worship. The very mention of boys and girls being of the number is of itself a sufficient proof of this. To inflict the punishment of death on so many of his fellow-creatures at once, although he might clearly have been warranted in so doing by the words of the imperial edict, in all probability appeared to this Magistrate a proceeding of too relentless and savage a nature to be had recourse to on this occasion; and he therefore contented himself with causing merely a few of those taken to undergo capital punishment, by way of example to the rest, whilst the others were only beaten with clubs, or sent in bonds *to the mines*. (Mosheim, Commentaries.)

* The original rescript of the Emperor to the Senate, is found in Cyprian, Epistola lxxxi. Ad Successum De Nuntiis Roma reversis persecutionem nuntiantibus. "Rescripsisse Valerianum ad Senatum ut Episcopi et Presbyteri et Diacones in continenti animadvertantur, senatores vero et egregii viri et equites Romani,"—("The second *et*," says Neander, "is a spurious addition, for the *egregii viri* are the *equites*, as the *senatores* are *clarissimi*.") "I find this passage," says Mr. Rose, the editor and translator of Neander, "thus printed in both editions of Neander's work. It appears that the printer must have left out the words, *equites Romani*, which follow the second *et* in the sentence of Cyprian. This will make Neander's remark in this parenthesis above, quite intelligible. But he may perhaps mean to condemn the words *equites Romani* also." "Dignitate amissa, etiam bonis spolientur, et si ademptis facultatibus Christiani esse perseveraverint, capite quoque multentur; matronæ vero ademptis bonis in exsilium relegentur, Cæsariani autem quicunque vel prius confessi fuerant vel nunc confessi fuerint, confiscentur et vincti in Cæsarianas possessiones descripti mittantur." Instead of *descripti*, "allotted or distributed," there is a various reading, *scripti*, or *inscripti*, "branded." We see by the following passage in Pontius's Life of Cyprian, that in the persecutions of Decius, Christians had been branded on the forehead: "Tot confessores, frontium notatarum secunda inscriptione signatos, et ad exemplum martyrii superstites reservatos, incentivo tubæ cœlestis animaret." The "prima inscriptio" was the "inscriptio crucis," χαρακτηρ, σφραγις του σταυρου, received in baptism. In the passage of Cyprian, the collocation of the words rather favours the common reading.

and to arrest the progress of Christianity among the higher orders of society. He does not appear to have wished to adopt unnecessarily cruel measures; but the people and the Governors did not always abide by the spirit of these instructions, as we learn from some of the martyrdoms of this persecution, against the genuineness of which no cogent arguments can, upon the whole, be produced.*

Xystus, the Bishop of Rome, or Sixtus, as he is sometimes designated, and four Deacons of his church, were the first who suffered martyrdom under this sanguinary edict. He had been elected as the successor of Stephen about three weeks after his death: he is said to have been of Greek extraction, but served, in the quality of Deacon, in the church at Rome, under that Prelate. Though he did not hold his situation twelve months, yet, if we consider the extent and influence of his labours for the flock of Christ, his fidelity, wisdom, and courage were greatly conspicuous. The imperial edict which Macrianus exacted from the Emperor for the summary execution of the Christian Clergy at Rome, was directed to the Senate, who immediately testified their obedience to their Sovereign, by a zealous compliance with his decree; and Xystus experienced the full severity of the rescript, the Almighty, doubtless, ordaining that the Pastor might be an unerring guide to the flock, animating them with courage to the combat, by example as well as by precept. Cyprian † certifies this in an epistle to Successus, and desires that the same might be notified to his colleagues, that the people might be reminded of their common danger, and encouraged to meet death as Christians. The terms which the Bishop of Carthage employs to record the martyrdom of Xystus, are generally understood to signify that he was beheaded in the catacombs; his burial-place being the scene of his martyrdom.

Intimately connected with the sufferings of Xystus, were those of his Deacon, Laurentius, one who during his lifetime was an ornament to the church at Rome. In early life he was raised to office in the Christian community, his piety strongly recommending him to the consideration of the people. Chrysologus and Augustine speak of him as an Archdeacon, probably because Xystus had placed him at the head of his Deacons, whose number was then limited to seven, and one to whom the care of the church treasure was committed. This was his position, at a time when ecclesiastical situations only rendered the possessors more conspicuous marks against which the shafts of persecution would be hurled. When Xystus was conducted to the place of execution, his faithful Deacon followed, and expressed his

* Neander, History of the Christian Religion and Church.

† "Xistum autem in cimitreo animadversum sciatis octavo iduum Augustarum die, et cum eo Diacones quatuor. Sed et huic persecutioni quotidie insistunt præfecti in urbe; et si qui sibi oblati fuerint animadvertantur; et bona eorum fisco vindicentur." (Epist. lxxxi. Ad Successum.) Quartus, a Deacon, is mentioned by some writers as the only individual who suffered with Xystus. Some imagine the name Quartus was but a *lapsus pennæ* of the copiers, and read this passage as follows, "with four Deacons;" asserting, that four Deacons suffered at Rome; namely, Pretextatus, Felicissimus, and Agapitus, with their Bishop, and Lawrence, who was martyred soon after.

grief by a flood of tears, which proceeded, as Ambrose observes, not from the anticipation of the loss of the Bishop, for he well knew, that his death would conduct him to a happy eternity, but from the certainty of his being deprived of the honour and advantage of dying with him. Laurentius is represented as thus addressing his Bishop: "O father! whither goest thou without the company of thy son? Whither hastenest thou without thy Deacon? Why am I now neglected? What have I done to deserve this treatment? Take me with you, and see whether you have committed the holy eucharist to a person unworthy of the honour: allow me also a share in your death, as you have admitted me to share in the ministry of the Saviour." To whom Xystus replied, "I forsake thee not, my son: I give thee to know that a sharper conflict awaiteth thee. A feeble and weak old man am I, and therefore run the race of a lighter and easier death; but young and strong art thou, and more gloriously shalt thou triumph over this tyrant. Thy time approacheth; cease to weep and lament; three days after thou shalt follow me." This answer Laurentius considered as a certain prediction of his own martyrdom. On his return from witnessing the tragic scene of the death of Xystus, he is said to have assembled the poor of the church, among whom he distributed what of the church's money remained in his hands; for by this means only could he be secure of that treasure being properly applied, which, after his death, might otherwise fall into the hands of the Pagans, and be perverted to profane and dishonourable uses.

The merciless Prefect, to use the graphic language of John Foxe, "understanding Laurentius to be a Minister not only of the sacraments, but also a distributor of the wealth of the church, promised to himself a double prey, by the apprehension of one silly soul. First, with the rake of avarice, to scrape to himself the treasure of poor Christians; then, with the fiery fork of tyranny, so to toss and turmoil them, that they should wax weary of their profession."* The Deacon was speedily brought before the Governor, who demanded of him where these riches were, and commanded him to deliver them up for the Emperor's use. "You Christians," he is reported to have said, "complain that we treat you with cruelty: at present I have no wish to employ torments. I ask of you something which it is in your power to grant. It is reported that, in your ceremonies, the Bishops offer the libations in vessels of gold; that the blood of the sacrifice is received in silver cups; and that, to give light to your nocturnal ceremonies, you employ tapers fixed in golden chandeliers. It is also said that, to furnish the offerings, the brethren not unfrequently sell their possessions. Bring now these hidden treasures forward. Our Sovereign has need of them for the maintenance of his troops." To this address the Deacon replied, without any appearance of surprise or agitation, "I acknowledge that our church is rich,† and that

* Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol. i., p. 207. Seeley. Edit. 8vo.

† In the early ages of the church, the Bishop had the immediate charge of all the poor, also of the widows, orphans, strangers, &c. When the churches came to have

its treasures exceed those of the Emperor. I will let you see the most precious of them; but you must give me three days to put them in order." The Prefect expressed himself satisfied, and Laurentius immediately hastened to assemble the numerous objects of distress, the sick, the aged, the lame, and the blind, who were supported by the charity of the Christians. Having, as he expressed himself desirous of doing, put all things in order, he went to the Prefect, and conducted him to the church, telling him that he should see there a great court full of golden vessels, and treasures collected in piles under the galleries. On reaching the place, the Magistrate looked round in vain for any appearance of the extraordinary wealth he had expected to discover; and, instead of the precious vessels, with the thought of which he had filled his imagination, he beheld only a crowd of miserable mendicants, under whose tattered garments none but a Christian philosopher could discover the glory of humanity. His countenance immediately indicated that he had discovered the Deacon's meaning; and the latter said to him, "Why do you look angry? The gold which you so anxiously desire is but the produce of the earth, and is the cause of many crimes: the true gold is that divine light of which these poor people are the disciples. These are the treasures I promised you: employ them to the advantage of Rome, of the Emperor, and of yourself." *

"Doubtless," observes the historian Milner, "had the mind of the Prefect been at all disposed to receive an instructive lesson, he had met with one here. The liberality of Christians in maintaining a great number of objects, and looking for no recompence but that which will take place at the resurrection of the just, while they patiently bore affliction, and humbly rested on an unseen Saviour, was perfectly agreeable to the mind of Him who bids his disciples, in a well-known parable, to relieve those who cannot recompense them. How glorious the scene, at a time that the rest of the world were tearing one another in pieces, and philosophers aided not the miseries of men in the least! But as the persecutors would not hear the doctrines explained, so neither would they see the precepts exemplified, with patience." † "Is it thus that I am to be mocked?" said the Prefect. "I am aware that you make a boast of despising death. I will quickly put you to the proof." The threat with which the Magistrate left the place where the Christians assembled was promptly executed. Laurentius was seized, and cast into a dungeon,

fixed revenues, it was decreed, that at least one-fourth part thereof should go to the relief of the poor; and, to provide for them the more commodiously, divers houses of charity were built, since denominated hospitals. They were governed wholly by the Priests and Deacons, under the inspection of the Bishops. In course of time separate revenues were assigned for the hospitals; and many, from motives of piety and charity, gave lands and money towards their erection. When the church discipline began to relax, the Priests, who till then had been the administrators of hospitals, converted them into a sort of *benefices*, which they held at pleasure, reserving the greatest part of the income to their own use; so that the intentions of the founders were frustrated.

* Stebbing, History of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 117.

† Milner, History of the Church of Christ, vol. i., cent. iii., chap. xvi., p. 502. 8vo. edit.

from which he was only taken out to be scourged, and fastened to a gridiron * over a slow fire, a torture which he more than once endured with unshrinking fortitude, daring the executioners to do their worst, by exclaiming, after he had been some time exposed to the flames, "I have been roasted long enough on this side, turn me on the other!" A little while after he said, in the same manner, "My body is now sufficiently cooked, you may satisfy yourselves with it whenever you please," and then expired. This hardihood was no evidence, perhaps, of any superior degree of Christian faith; but it is one of the many astonishing proofs which exist, that man is capable of enduring the worst tortures of the body, to support the truth of principles, on the assertion of which he rests the present dignity or the future welfare of his spirit.† We cannot fully close the account of Laurentius, without adverting to the case of Romanus, a soldier, and one of the guards who assisted at his execution. The heroic courage with which the Deacon sustained the most excruciating torments was, in the estimation of the soldier, an irrefragable proof of the truth of that religion for which he so bravely suffered, and filled him with a deep veneration for that God who enabled his saints to "endure, as seeing him who is invisible." When Laurentius was first removed from the torture, and remanded to prison, Romanus, who was stationed at the place of confinement, improved that opportunity, and made diligent inquiry into the faith of Christ, and received Christian baptism at the hands of his illustrious prisoner. Thus strengthened, he was enabled to endure martyrdom even before his tutor; for, no sooner was he baptized, than he was apprehended, and carried before the Judge, who ordered him to be scourged and beheaded, which was immediately done.

We left Cyprian at Curubis, at some distance from Carthage, to which place he had been sent in the August of the preceding year. He appears to have continued there a twelvemonth. He now returned from exile by permission, and lived in a garden near Carthage, which, although it was previously his private property, and was sold by him for the benefit of the poor, had been providentially restored to him. Here he regulated the affairs of the church, and distributed to the poor. It was in this place, also, that he was informed that the persecution, after a brief interval, was broken out afresh; and, hearing various reports, he sent messengers to Rome, to obtain informa-

* The name Laurentius is very celebrated among the saints of the Romish Calendar, and we may perhaps doubt whether he met his death by being broiled upon a gridiron; but it cannot be denied, that the testimony to his martyrdom is numerous and respectable. (See Baronii Annales, Ad an. 261, n. 6; Kortholt, De Persecut. Eccles. Primævæ, cap. ix., sect. xx., p. 406; Ruinart, Acta Sincera, p. 187; Tillemont, Memoires, tom. iv., p. 38. 4to. Paris, 1696.)

† We give this story at some length, because it has sufficient marks of credibility, and is supported by the evidence of Augustine. We cannot go with Fleury in various other stories. He seems ready to believe everything, Gibbon to believe nothing, in subjects of martyrology. Whatever judgment they may be possessed of, it remains in both equally unexercised; indiscriminate credulity being as blind a thing as indiscriminate unbelief. It is the duty of a reasonable creature to discern and to distinguish: this requires labour and judgment. Fleury's method needs only the former, Gibbon's neither the one nor the other. (Milner.)

tion on which he could rely. From these he learnt what he immediately communicated to the brethren. Cyprian was now in daily expectation of his end. Galerius Maximus had succeeded Paternus in the proconsulate, and Cyprian anxiously awaited his summons. At this period a number of Senators and others, influential in the commonwealth for their opulence and station, visited him. Long-continued friendship led many to sympathize with him, so that they tendered their assistance to effect his concealment: Cyprian, however, declined such services. He already had tasted the bitterness of banishment; he knew the perils to which his pagan friends would be exposed had he fled at their suggestion; he decided to remain where he was, and calmly wait the result. The Deacon Pontius, the biographer of Cyprian, informs us, in opposition to the intemperate zeal of those who were for giving themselves up to martyrdom, that he had his fears on this subject; but that his fears were conscientious, lest he should displease God by throwing away his life. He continued at Carthage, exhorting the faithful, and desiring that when he suffered martyrdom, death might find him employed for God. However, being informed that the Proconsul, then at Utica, had sent some soldiers to bring him thither, he was induced to comply, for a season, with the advice of his friends, to retire to some place of concealment, that he might not suffer at Utica, but, if he were called to martyrdom, he might finish his life among his own people at Carthage: so he states the matter in the last of his letters to the Clergy and people.* "Here," says he, "in this concealment, I wait for the return of the Proconsul to Carthage, ready to appear before him, and to say what shall be given me at that hour. Do you, dear brethren, do you, agreeably to the discipline you have always received, and to the instructions you have learnt from me, continue still and quiet: let none of you excite any tumult on account of the brethren, or offer himself voluntarily to the Gentiles. He who is seized and delivered up ought to speak; the Lord in us will speak at that hour; and confession, rather than profession, is our duty."

At length the day arrived for the apprehension of Cyprian. The Proconsul having returned to Carthage, the Bishop went back to his garden; and while he was there, two officers, with a party of soldiers, came to arrest him. They conveyed him in a chariot, between them, to a place called Sexti, about six miles from Carthage, by the sea-side, where Galerius Maximus lodged indisposed. That officer, being informed of his arrival, directed the Captain of the guard to take him back to his house, about the distance of a stadium from the Prætorium, where he might remain until the following day; but, by the time he reached his place of destination, the Christians in Carthage had been generally acquainted with his apprehension, and flocked in great numbers to see him. They were permitted to converse with him for some time; and so courteous was the Captain of the guard, that his friends partook of food at the same table with him; and

* Milner, History of the Church of Christ, vol. i., cent. iii., chap. 16, p. 483.

when the multitude were obliged to retire, they continued to linger about the door of the house, before which they passed the night fasting, from a fear lest some injury might be inflicted on their Bishop before his trial.* Cyprian gave particular directions in reference to certain young Christian women † whom he beheld among the crowd. The next day the Proconsul sent for Cyprian, who went to the Prætorium, attended by crowds of people. The Proconsul not yet appearing, he was ordered to wait for him in a private place, where he sat down. Being in a great perspiration, a soldier, who had formerly been a Christian, offered Cyprian a change of raiment; to whom the Bishop replied, "Shall we seek a remedy for that which may last no longer than to-day?" ‡ He was then brought into the judgment-hall, where the Proconsul sat, who, addressing the martyr, said, "Are you Thascius Cyprian?" "I am," was the reply. "The very sacred Emperors command you to sacrifice to the gods," continued Galerius Maximus. "I shall not comply," firmly answered Cyprian. "Think awhile," said the Magistrate. "A matter in which the right course is so manifest," answered the Bishop, "requires no reflection." "I pity your situation," the Proconsul is further reported to have said, "and would consult your safety." To which Cyprian replied, "I have no wish that my situation should be otherwise than that which may enable me to glorify God, and speedily obtain his blessing; for the afflictions of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us; and, 'this light affliction, which is but for a moment, shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'" §

* "Illuxit denique dies alius, ille signatus, ille promissus, ille divinus, quem si tyrannus ipse differre voluisset, nunquam prorsus valeret." Such is the glowing language in which the arrival of this day is decribed. (Ruinart, Acta Sincera, p. 214.)

† Intimating that the young maidens should be kept at home (custodiri). In some copies it is "castigari," which Rigaltius thus explains: "Admonuit ut castissimè sese haberent, castitatis, sanctitatis, et pudicitiæ memores." The reading "custodiri" appears more simple; and it is the ancient reading: "Quid illud, quod cùm in alium diem dilatus esset, atque illuc se multitudo fratrum ac sororum congregans pro foribus —pernoctaret, *custodiri* puellas præcepit. (August., Serm. 309, n. 4.) A principe detentus, virginum pudicitiam—custodivit." (Fulgentius, Serm. 6.) The passage exhibits a lively picture of Cyprian's unceasing attention to decency and good order: to use the words of Mr. Gibbon, (Decline and Fall, vol. i., p. 434, Milman's edit.,) "The Bishop exercised a last, and very proper, act of jurisdiction, by directing that the younger females, who watched in the street, should be removed from the dangers and temptations of a nocturnal crowd." (Dalrymple.)

‡ The following remarks are well worthy of attention: "The sixteenth chapter of Gibbon's History I cannot help considering as a very ingenious and specious, but very disgraceful, extenuation of the cruelties perpetrated by the Roman Magistrates against the Christians. It is written in the most contemptibly factious spirit of prejudice against the sufferers; it is unworthy of a philosopher, and of a man of humanity. Let the narrative of Cyprian's death be examined. He had to relate the murder of an innocent man, of advanced age, and in a station deemed venerable by a considerable body of the provincials of Africa, put to death, because he refused to sacrifice to Jupiter. Instead of pointing the indignation of posterity against such an atrocious act of tyranny, he dwells with visible art on all the small circumstances of decorum and politeness which attended this murder, and which he relates with as much parade as if they were the most important particulars of the event." (Memoirs of Sir James Mackintosh, vol. i., p. 245.)

§ Cyprian appears to have had an impression that at this time he should suffer, and that the instrument of his martyrdom would be the sword. How this was revealed to

These words appear to have provoked the indignation of the Proconsul beyond measure. His countenance is said to have glowed with anger as he heard them; and immediately after, having consulted a short time with the persons forming his Council,* he thus addressed the accused :†—"You have, for a considerable period past, made a profession of impiety, resisting every attempt of the Emperors to brink you back to their holy religion. Since, therefore, you are the head of that pernicious sect, you shall suffer as a warning to those whom you have deceived, and the discipline of the laws shall be strengthened by your blood." ‡ Having thus spoken, he took a small

him, we learn from Pontus, to whom the Bishop related the following vision:—"I had not composed myself to sleep," said the martyr, "when a young man, of an extraordinary stature, appeared to me, and, as I thought, carried me to the Proconsul's tribunal. As soon as that Magistrate saw me, he wrote down my sentence in a table-book; but as it was not preceded by the usual interrogatories, I could not guess what it was: I observed, however, that my guide, who had posted himself behind the Judge, perused the writing with no small attention and curiosity. As he could not conveniently tell me the purport of it in words, he endeavoured to make me understand it by signs; for, stretching out his hand, he made a motion with it like that of a sword when employed in beheading, which I immediately comprehended, and concluded that I was condemned to that death; upon which I addressed myself to the Proconsul, and begged a day's reprieve, to settle my affairs. After I had urged my petition for some time, with much earnestness, he wrote again; and though I knew not the words, yet I could understand, by his looks, that my petition was granted, which was confirmed to me by the young man twisting his fingers together." Which vision, our martyr's historian observes, signified his martyrdom a year after he saw it.

* "His Council," according to the form observed in provincial judicatories among the Romans. A similar expression occurs Acts xxv. 12.

† Strictly speaking, Galerius was "hardly able to pronounce the words" ("vix ægrè dixit verbis hujusmodi"). When the Proconsul pronounced sentence, he was greatly indisposed, and he died soon after. It seems that, through indisposition, he was scarcely able to pronounce the words. Dr. Lardner translates the passage, "in angry terms;" but Mr. Gibbon, "with some reluctance." The learned must determine as to the merits of the various translations. Mr. Gibbon adds, that the sentence was conceived in the following terms:—"That Thascius Cyprianus should be immediately beheaded, as the enemy of the gods of Rome, and as the chief and ringleader of a criminal association, which he had seduced into an impious resistance against the laws of the most holy Emperors, Valerian and Gallienus." The sentence is well turned; yet it expresses not the full meaning of the Proconsul. The same writer is of opinion, that in the trial of Cyprian everything was conducted with the greatest courtesy by the Magistrate. It was necessary that the imperial mandate should be obeyed; the trial was short but regular; and the manner of the execution of Cyprian was the mildest and least painful that could be inflicted on a person convicted of any capital offence. Of this, however, no man *living* could be a competent judge, unless he had been previously hanged *and* beheaded. But, after all, what are the expressions of the Proconsul, in which, if translated into familiar language, a plain English reader would discover anything but "hard words and hanging?" For example, "Are *you* the ringleader of the profane crew? You are an old, incorrigible offender, the professed enemy of piety, and the chief of a gang of heinous malefactors; your blood is required for the establishment of religious order, and you are to be instantly beheaded." This translation is not elegant, but it is just. (Dalrymple.) "There is nothing," says a modern writer, "in the Life of Cyprian, by Pontius, nor in the ancient manuscripts, which can make us suppose that the Presbyters and Deacons, in their clerical character, and known to be such, had the permission to attend their Bishop. Setting aside all religious considerations, it is impossible not to be surprised at the kind of complaisance with which the historian Gibbon here insists, in favour of the persecutors, on some mitigating circumstances allowed at the death of a man whose only crime was maintaining his own opinions with frankness and courage."

‡ "Sanguine tuo sancietur disciplina." The apparent "ambiguity" of the original is preserved in the translation, "Religion shall be established by thy blood." Galerius

tablet in his hand, from which he read the sentence, which ran thus: "It is ordained that Thascius Cyprian be put to death by the sword;" on hearing which, the Bishop devoutly exclaimed, "Praised be God!" The Christians who were present could not restrain their feelings, at finding themselves on the point of losing the man who had for so many years instructed and comforted them. "Execute us with him!" they simultaneously exclaimed, as he was borne away to the scene of his martyrdom, whither they and the Pagans followed in immense crowds. The place chosen by the executioners was a level spot of ground, situated about a league from the city, and bordered with large trees. The most intense anxiety was evinced by the people to witness his last moments; those who were able, took their position on the lofty branches of the trees; and the pressure was so great, that Cyprian himself felt some uneasiness at what might probably take place. Soon all was ready for his departure; and after prostrating himself on the earth, and praying for some minutes, he took off his upper garments,* placed a bandage over his eyes, and, giving the executioner twenty-five golden crowns,† awaited the stroke on his knees, and with his hands crossed upon his breast. His blood was caught by handkerchiefs and napkins, which the Christians, now fast multiplying their superstitious practices, had placed about him on the ground; and at night they were allowed to take the body, and inter it by torchlight with great solemnity.‡ The circumstances attending

Maximus intended to speak of polytheism; and yet his words are applicable, with equal propriety, to the Christian religion. To the men of that age the expression appeared remarkable. Certain it is, that in the event, the religion of the Romans *was not* established; and, if we may credit a hundred testimonies, Christianity *was*. This is expressed with more energy and elegance by Gibbon: "On these melancholy occasions," says he, "there were many among the Gentiles who pitied, who admired, and who were converted; *the generous enthusiasm* was communicated from the sufferer to the spectators, and the blood of the martyrs, according to a well-known observation, became the seed of the church." Indeed it must have been an *enthusiasm* uncommonly *generous*, which could induce men to forsake the religion of their fathers, at the hazard of suffering death, even death the mildest and least painful, or the milder chastisements of imprisonment, exile, or *slavery in the mines!!* (Dalrymple.)

* Milner says, "Cyprian took off his mantle." Dr. Cave says, "He put off his dalmatic, or under-coat, which he delivered to the Deacons." There is, in the original account, a minuteness in the description of the different parts of Cyprian's dress, which adds to the credibility of the narrative. Many trifling commentaries have been made on the names given to the garments of Cyprian. The translator, omitting any detail of this nature, has endeavoured to speak in general terms; and, as much as possible, to avoid every expression that is become mean by general use. (Dalrymple.)

† There is added in the MSS., "And when the executioner came, Cyprian ordered twenty pieces of gold to be given unto him." Bishop Fell pleasantly remarks, that this donative is to be ascribed to the liberality of the copyists.

‡ "By torchlight." Some impertinent transcriber has added, "cum voto et triumpho magno," "with supplications and a mighty triumph." Observing the words, "cum cereis," he concluded that *here* there was a pompous procession with wax tapers and litanies, according to the usage of later times. The truth is, that the interment of Cyprian was performed in the most private manner possible, "that his body might not be again exposed to the insults of the Gentiles." Gibbon, happening to overlook this, has supposed, "that the body was transported in a triumphal procession, with a splendid illumination, to the burial-place of the Christians." The commentary of Cardinal Baronius is remarkable. In the original there is, "Cum cereis et scolacibus;" "that is, with ropes dipped in wax, pitch, or other inflammable matter." Baronius, not understanding the word, appears to have read, "cum scholaribus;" and hence

the martyrdom of Cyprian, give us reason to believe one of these things; that is, either that the Emperor had conceived the idea of gradually cutting off the principal members of the Christian community, and so consigning it to probable ruin; or, that the manner in which those who were condemned suffered, depended on the different provincial Magistrates by whom they were tried. If the former were the case, it may be supposed that the Emperor would be content to execute his design, without having recourse to those tortures that only excite the violent passions which give greater strength, while they last, to sects as well as to individuals. In the latter case, we must believe that the character of the present, as well as of the preceding, Proconsul, was superior to that of most persecutors; for the one only condemned Cyprian to an easy exile, and the other subjected him to none of those sufferings which it was so usual for the persecutors to inflict on their helpless victims.

"Thus, after an eventful and instructive period of about twelve years, since his conversion," says Milner, "after a variety of toils and exercises among friends, and open foes, and nominal Christians, by a death more gentle than commonly fell to the lot of martyrs, rested at length in Jesus the magnanimous and charitable spirit of Cyprian of Carthage. An extraordinary personage truly! Let writers whose views are secular, celebrate their heroes, their statesmen, and their philosophers; and while a Christian taste is derided, let us at least enjoy the rare felicity of these times of civil liberty, in employing the press to do some justice, however deficient our powers may be, to men whom the modern taste seems willing to consign to contemptuous oblivion. And let their memory be blessed for ever." * Without doubt Cyprian had his failings, and these, in some considerable degree, rendered his earthly career rough and thorny. He entertained the loftiest notions of the episcopal authority. The severe and inviolable unity of the outward and visible church appeared to him an integral part of Christianity; and the rigid discipline enforced by the episcopal order, the only means of maintaining that unity. The pale which enclosed the church from the rest of mankind was drawn with the most relentless precision. It was the ark, and all without it were left to perish in the unsparing deluge.† The growth of heretical discord or disobedience was inexpiable, even by the blood of the transgressor. He might bear the flames with equanimity, he might submit to be torn to pieces by wild beasts: there could be no martyr *without* the church. Tortures and death bestowed not the crown of immortality: they were but the just retribution of treason to the faith. The fearful times which arose during the episcopate of Cyprian, tried these stern and lofty principles, as the questions which

he says, "Pristinus hic mos—Christianos sepeliendi præcedente Clero diversarum classium atque *scholarum*, accensas faces gestantibus singulis, magnâ planè pompâ." (Dalrymple.)

* Milner, History of the Church of Christ, vol. i., cent. iii., chap. xiv., p. 486.

† "Si potuit evadere quisquam, qui extra arcam Noe fuit, et qui extra ecclesiam foris fuerit, evadit." (Cyp. de Unitat. Ecclesiæ.)

arose out of the Decian persecution did his judgment and moderation. The Bishop of Carthage, who embraced without hesitation the severer opinion with regard to the re-baptizing of heretics, notwithstanding his awful horror of the guilt of apostacy, acquiesced in, if he did not dictate, the more temperate decisions of the Carthaginian Synod, concerning those whose weakness had betrayed them either into the public denial or a timid dissimulation of the faith.*

* Milman, History of Christianity, vol. ii., p. 248.

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